SPECIAL REPORT: METROID PRIME HUNTERS

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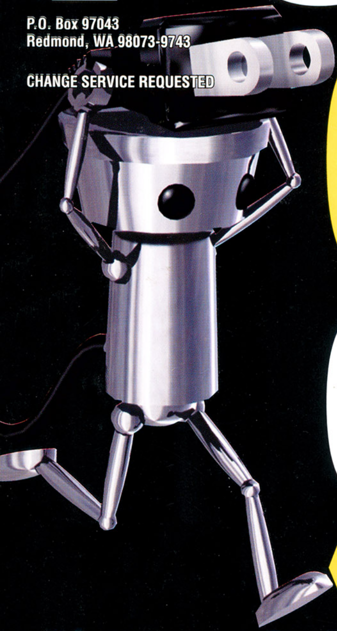

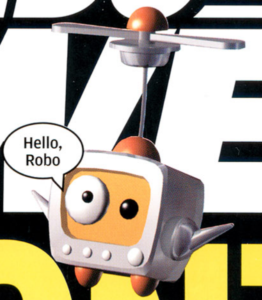

GONZO GAMING!

CHIBI-ROBO, NINTENDO'S DOMESTIC HERO, FEARLESSLY LEADS A REVOLUTION IN RADICAL GAME DESIGN (p.27)

2005 POWER AWARDS
EXERCISE YOUR RIGHT
VOTE!

EXTREME

ANIMAL CROSSING MAKEOVERS

SONIC RIDERS DRIVERS WANTED

INSIDER PREVIEWS

SPLINTER CELL 4
Death stab from Ubi.

FIFA STREET 2
FIFA la difference!

POKéMON TROZEI
Gotta line 'em all up!

NARUTO
1,000 Years of Pain!

ONE WAY
WHY LIE?
I NEED
MARIO KART

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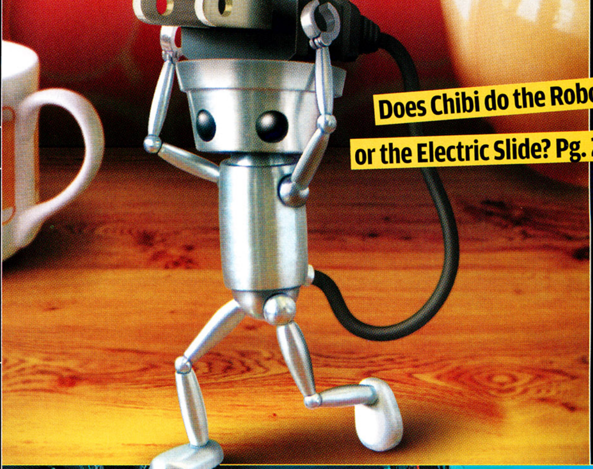
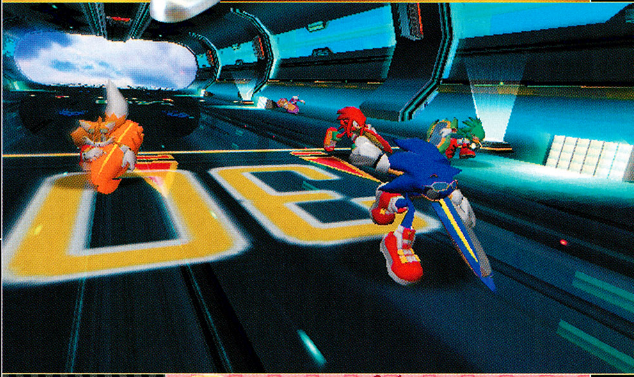


Does Chibi do the Robot or the Electric Slide? Pg. 28



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Hey, Sonic—Ronald McDonald called. He wants his shoes back.

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You'll laugh; you'll cry; you'll wear pink.

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Vote all you want—we'll print more ballots.

She may not look like much, but she's got it where it counts. Pg. 42

www.yugioh-online.net
Shonen Jump's Yu-Gi-Oh! Online
Rule the school!
Welcome, elite duelists! My name is Sheppard, the chancellor of Duel Academy.
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NINTENDO POWER

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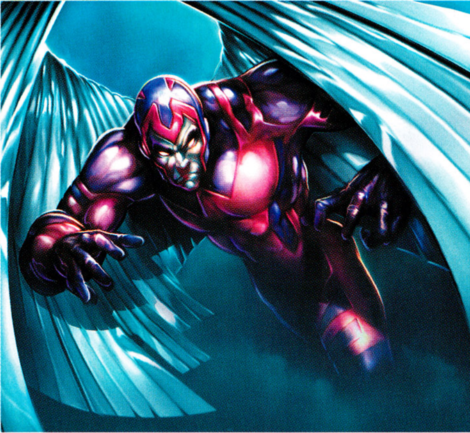


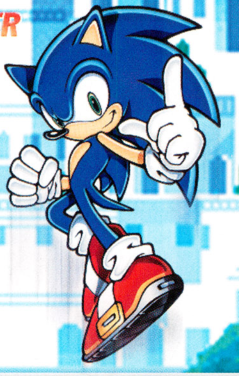
BIKE SHOW!
BIKE WEEK

A retrospective on the character who made cow-launching an art form. Pg. 76

9 OUT OF 10! "ONE HECK OF A ROLLER COASTER RIDE"

• NINTENDO POWER

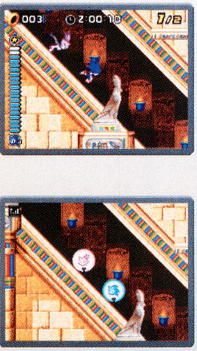
Sonic Rush pushes the DS to its limits as Sonic rushes, races and dashes between BOTH screens with dizzying dives, near vertical curves, extreme jumps and brain-twisting loops! Prepare for a whole new dual screen experience, Sonic-style!



9.5 OUT OF 10 !

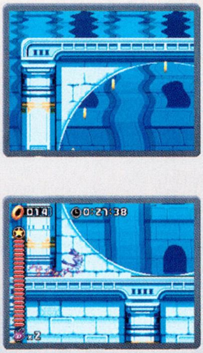
"That Sonic epiphany we've been waiting for all these years."

• Play Magazine

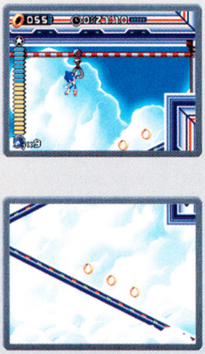


Race with Sonic and Blaze!

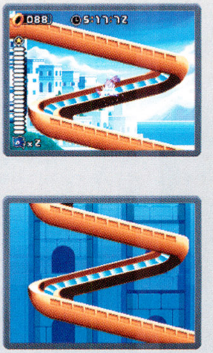
Power-blast through the curves!



Speed up on major loops!



Hang on in high places!



Move in 3D too!

ELECTRONIC GAMING MONTHLY
SILVER

GAME OF THE YEAR 2005
BEST PLATFORM GAME

"Sonic is about speed, and that's what Rush delivers in spades."

• Electronic Gaming Monthly

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Pulse

NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT

A happy robotic homemaker, a giant pinball flattening foes in feudal Japan, a subterranean Robin Hood, a princess with vibes, and a collection of curious minigames touching on relationships and love—the five subjects of this month's feature Breaking the Mold explore topics and game styles few gamers or game makers have ever contemplated. Looking for insights as to what inspired the developers, NP's writers dig below the surface and discover Chibi-Robo, Odama, Drill Dozer, Super Princess Peach, and The Rub Rabbits! aren't just technical or visual experiments; they're innovative games that lead to truly great and often-surprising experiences. And next month's Brain Age feature will prove that Nintendo will stop at nothing to blow (or sharpen) your mind; you can count on it.

Great gaming is also on the horizon from Metroid Prime Hunters, and we reveal amazing details about the long-awaited multiplayer shooter. You might be even more amazed that you can turn your Animal Crossing village into a tropical paradise using simple strategies; we'll show you how! Additionally, in this issue we're debuting two new features: PlayBack—a look at classic games—and Game Over, a special one-page strategy guide for clobbering a final boss such as this month's victim, FFIV'sZeromus. Add Inside Zelda, reviews, previews, news, an expansive look at Sonic Riders, a reality check for golfers, and voting for the 2005 NP Awards, and you've got one packed March mag.

Scott Pelland
Managing Editor

LETTERS

TOP 200

When I picked up Volume 199, I almost threw my fists in the air with rage when I saw how you ranked what is quite possibly the best game of all time: Metal Gear Solid. Now I don't mean to sound like a fanboy, but number 68? How could a game like Conker's Bad Fur Day beat MGS? [It had] a grade-A plot full of twists and turns around every corner, some of the best gameplay I've ever experienced and unforgettable boss fights (like the Psycho Mantis duel), and the characters! Solid Snake is not only cool, he has a complex backstory and personality. So hear my cries and please give credit where credit is due!

Dr. Jones
via the Internet

Though we agree that Metal Gear Solid is one of the greatest games of all time, the fact that The Twin Snakes was merely a remake prevented it from placing higher on the list.

I think that you messed up big-time on the Top 200 countdown. When I opened issue 200 and saw that Super Smash Bros. Melee [ranked] number 16, I was outraged. It is the best game ever. Ocarina of Time is great, but Melee is way better. It should have at least placed in the top three.

Jonathan P.
via the Internet

I agree with almost every game that you put on the Top 200, but I have issues with the games that were placed in the top 10. First, I don't know many Metroid fans who like Metroid Prime more than Super Metroid. Next, The Wind Waker is an awesome game, but I don't think it really deserved a spot in the top 10. If I was choosing the titles, Final Fantasy 3 for the SNES would have been number 4. My final and biggest complaint is the position of Resident Evil 4 at number 2. It's a great game and everything, but there are so many other titles that have done so much more for gaming. At the cutoff date [for the list], RE4 had only been out for six months. I seem to recall a similar [situation] in issue 100 when GoldenEye 007 was in the top 10. I would have pushed Resident Evil 4 down and put A Link to the Past at number 2. Then I would have bumped up Chrono Trigger to number 3. As for Ocarina of Time at number 1, I couldn't agree more.

Yumil1988
via the Internet

Overall, not a bad list, but some games are absent, and some games are definitely in the wrong order! Where in the world is WWF No Mercy? That is by far the greatest wrestling game to this day. Where is NBA Jam: Tournament Edition? Street Fighter II . . . yeah, OK, but Street Fighter II: Turbo was the best of the Street Fighters that appeared on the SNES. Super Bomberman was literally the bomb, yet it's not highly ranked. That was like *the* ultimate multiplayer console game. C'mon, GoldenEye 007 at number 20? That's a top-10 game. Speaking of golden, Golden Sun at number 31? Yes it's a great RPG, but number 31? And Super Mario Sunshine at number 13? Again, a fun, great game, but unworthy of such a high spot. Finally, once again Final Fantasy III gets the edge over Final Fantasy II [as it did in Volume 100]. Am I the only one that believes FF II has the better storyline? One of your writers better be on my side!

Nick L.
via the Internet

At least one member of the NP crew concurs with you on each of those points, Nick, but the list was determined democratically. Unfortunately for a couple of the writers, the NP form of democracy tends to involve barbed wire and a cattle prod.

I am pretty confident when I say that nobody on Earth was excited to see what you all thought was the best Nintendo game of all time. We all knew you were going to choose The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time. It is a pretty good game, but it is absolutely not the best game of all time. Metroid Prime is at least twice as good.

Ian H.
via the Internet

No matter what anyone else says, I for one was overjoyed when I found that you guys picked Ocarina of Time for the top Nintendo video game of all time. It was Ocarina of Time that sucked me into gaming. I was six when my 14-year-old cousin was using his newly discovered Kokiri sword and I decided, "Wow, I want to play that!" I managed to convince my parents to buy me a Nintendo 64 that Christmas, along with a copy of Ocarina of Time. I turned on the power and watched in awe as the hero rode by on his horse. It is still the best game I ever played. Hats off to NP.

Emkay
via the Internet

PS—Resident Evil 4 got second? Over games like Super Mario 64 and Super Smash Bros. Melee? Wha? Did you guys get hit on the head a little too hard or what?

I just wanted to let you know that if Resident Evil 4 is not number 1 on your Top 200 list, then you guys can expect a couple of chainsaw guys at your door (unless it gets beat by Ocarina of Time).

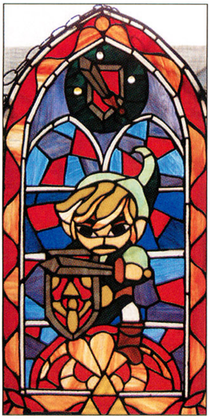
GanonSlayer13
via the Internet

Whew.

WINDOW MAKER

Just thought I'd share this with the Nintendo community. I'm sure it would look really cool in Pulse. I had to greatly reduce the number of pieces from the original Wind Waker promo poster, although it's still 200+ pieces. It took about 40 hours to complete, and I only cut myself twice!

Jarod S.
via the Internet



That, sir, is awesome.

MORDOR, WASHINGTON

Can you show us some pics of your workplace? I have been wondering what it looks like forever!

Chris B.
via the Internet

NP headquarters:

KOOPA PROCREATION

I must say, out of everyone in the Mario universe, Baby Bowser is ultimately my favorite. But the storyline in Super Mario Sunshine makes me wonder. Who *is* Baby Bowser's mom? I happen to know for a fact that male Koopas can not lay eggs.

Chris the Hedgehog
via the Internet

How exactly do you know that "for a fact"?

WALLET OF SORROW

After re-reading the Pulse section in Volume 196, I saw the message [recommending] Castlevania: Aria of Sorrow as a good starting point for someone new to the series. So I checked various gaming retailers and found that they either didn't have it, or it was about $100! What's the deal!?!

Derek W.
via the Internet

Aria of Sorrow has become pretty rare, hence the exorbitant prices. Fortunately, Konami is releasing a new Aria of Sorrow/Harmony of Dissonance double pack for an MSRP of only $29.99. It should be available by the time you read this.

HEARTTHROB

After seeing Andy Myers' picture in the Community section in Volume 199, I must say I am rather attracted to him (looking past the severed ear). Can you tell me more about him? Like his age, sign and phone number?

DG
via the Internet

Andy is a 28-year old Aries. We'd give you his phone number, but he's still trying to elude his last stalker.

FOR FUN AND PROFIT

Hey NP, I need serious help. I turn 17 in a few months and I'm really getting into Nintendo stuff. I've covered the wall with video game posters, and I'm checking out game-design schools. But my mom thinks I'm wasting my life and my video game time has been limited to 30 minutes a week. She thinks I should be a construction worker or something.

Joshua
via the Internet

Most of our moms felt the same way, but look at us now. All of that "wasted" time led to careers doing something we love. And we don't know the exact statistics, but we're betting your average game designer is less likely than a construction worker to have a steel girder fall on his head. You might want to point that out to your mom.

APOLOGIES TO RIDLEY SCOTT

Is Chris S. an alien?

Alborz O.
via the Internet

No, but you wouldn't believe what happened to him the other day. . . .

CORRECTOR'S CORNER

I just wanted to inform you about a small mistake in Volume 199. While this might not seem like a big deal to you guys, it is a big deal to a Sega fan like me. When you guys showed off your video game swag [in the community section], you said that Steve's [NiGHTS Into Dreams] was for the Sega CD when it's really for the Sega Saturn.

Leapsouth
via the Internet

Steve T. responds: "Oh, I consider it a big deal all right. I want my fellow Segaphiles to know that the error was not mine. Let's just say the offending party is a rather dashing Aries."

PLEASE WRITE US:

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NINTENDO POWER

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VOLUME 201—March 2006
Nintendo Power is printed in the U.S.A. and published by Nintendo of America Inc., 4820 150th Avenue NE, Redmond, Washington, 98052, at $59.88 per year in the U.S.A. ($83.88 in Canada).

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MOST WANTED

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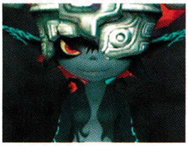


>NINTENDO GAMECUBE

We heard from some readers that last month's egg nog recipe was a little bland. For more flavor, try penguin eggs.

1. The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess
2. Chibi-Robo
3. Sonic Riders
4. Odama
5. Harvest Moon: Magical Melody

>GAME BOY ADVANCE

After (literally) years of waiting, Tales fans are eager to get their hands on Phantasia.

1. Tales of Phantasia
2. Naruto: Ninja Council
3. Pirate Battle
4. Metal Slug 1
5. The Tower SP

>NINTENDO DS

Mario Bros., Metroid, Resident Evil, and Mana all on one platform? Sounds like handheld heaven to us.

1. New Super Mario Bros.
2. Metroid Prime Hunters
3. Resident Evil: Deadly Silence
4. Children of Mana
5. Super Princess Peach

TOP SELLERS

>NINTENDO GAMECUBE

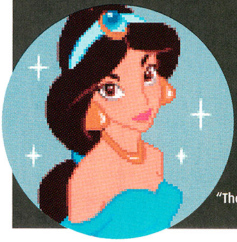
The only thing missing from Mario Party 7's maritime festivities: Somalian pirates. And egg nog.

1. Mario Party 7
2. Dance Dance Revolution: Mario Mix
3. Pokémon XD: Gale of Darkness
4. LEGO *Star Wars*
5. Shadow the Hedgehog
6. Harry Potter and The Goblet of Fire
7. Mario Superstar Baseball
8. Super Mario Sunshine
9. Tony Hawk's American Wasteland
10. Madden NFL 06

TOP SELLERS

>GAME BOY ADVANCE

Emerald's long reign at the top comes to an end as Pikachu and pals fall to the might of Disney Princess.



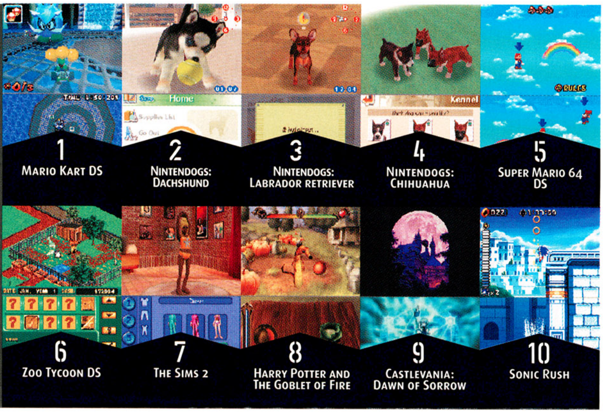
1. Disney Princess
2. Pokémon Emerald
3. Ms. Pac-Man Maze Madness
4. SpongeBob SquarePants/ Nicktoons Double Pack
5. Crash Bandicoot: N-Tranced
6. The Simpsons: Road Rage
7. Shrek 2
8. Disney's Finding Nemo
9. Bratz: Rock Angelz
10. Harry Potter and The Goblet of Fire

"Those Gunstar Heroes are so handsome."

TOP SELLERS

>NINTENDO DS

Keep on buyin' Mario Kart. We need fresh butts to whup.



1. Mario Kart DS
2. Nintendogs: Dachshund
3. Nintendogs: Labrador Retriever
4. Nintendogs: Chihuahua
5. Super Mario 64 DS
6. Zoo Tycoon DS
7. The Sims 2
8. Harry Potter and The Goblet of Fire
9. Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow
10. Sonic Rush

Sales data courtesy of the NPDFunworld TRSTS Video Game Source.

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COMING OF AGE?

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Cockroaches are infesting at Office on 2F. Do something right away, or damage will spread

TOWERING INFESTO

THAT'S A MOUTHFUL!

LOOKS MARVELOUS

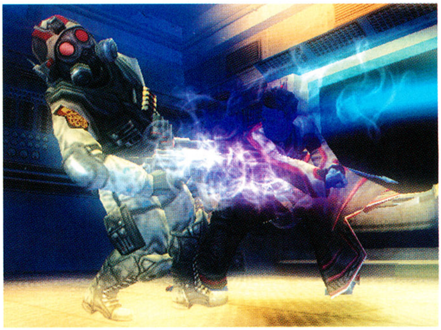
X3 Xcitement

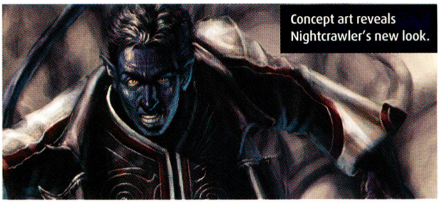
Coinciding with this spring's probable blockbuster, Wolverine, Nightcrawler, and Iceman are jumping out of the movies and comics and onto all Nintendo systems. We hope you like the smell of brimstone.

Snikt. Bamf. If those words mean anything to you, you've got a lot to look forward to in 2006. May marks the release of Fox's third *X-Men* feature film, and to go along with it, Activision is bringing an X3 game to Nintendo GameCube, DS, and Game Boy Advance. Set prior to the events of the movie, the GCN version—developed by Z-Axis of Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX fame—stars Nightcrawler, Iceman, and Wolverine in a 3-D action-adventure extravaganza.

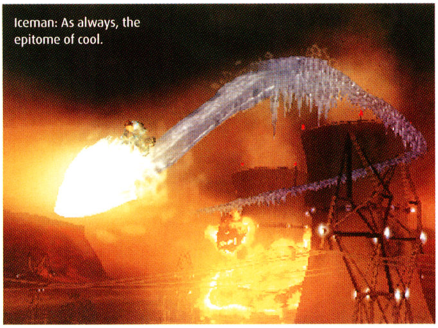
Character-specific levels will allow the three mutant mainstays to show off their trademark powers with style. Nightcrawler's stages are designed for a stealthy approach and are filled with rafters and climbable walls so he can make the most of his acrobatic skills; he can also use his teleportation power to sneak up on foes and knock them out before they know what hit 'em. By contrast, Wolverine's stages will be all about in-your-face slash-'em-up combat (complete with destructible environments) as he puts his trademark healing factor and berserker rage to use against some of his famous rivals. Meanwhile, Iceman's wide-open areas will let him take to the air with his patented ice-slide maneuver and unleash hailstorms and ice blasts. All three characters will have upgradeable skills, and other CPU-controlled X-Men will join the heroes in battle; Colossus, for example, will lend Nightcrawler his strength in certain stages.

Deep ties to the movies and comic books further enhance the game's potential. Activision received access to the film's preproduction assets to ensure authentic costumes and art direction, plus Chris Claremont (the legendary X-Men comic scribe) and Zak Penn (the screenwriter for *X2* and *X3*), are coscripting the game. The plot connects the second and third *X-Men* films by detailing Iceman's evolution into a full-fledged member of the team and explaining Nightcrawler's

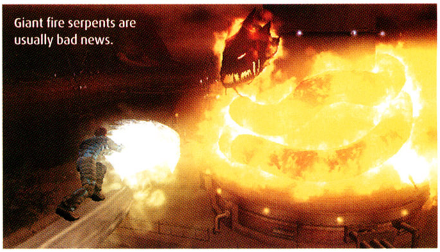




Concept art reveals Nightcrawler's new look.



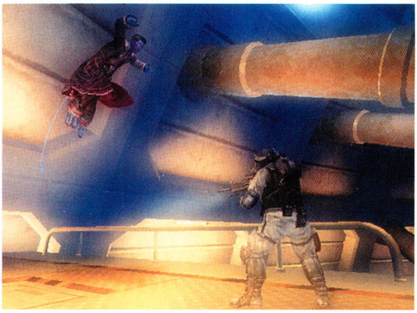
Iceman: As always, the epitome of cool.

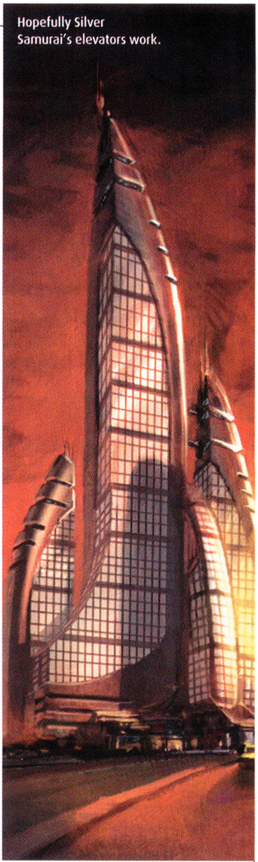


Giant fire serpents are usually bad news.

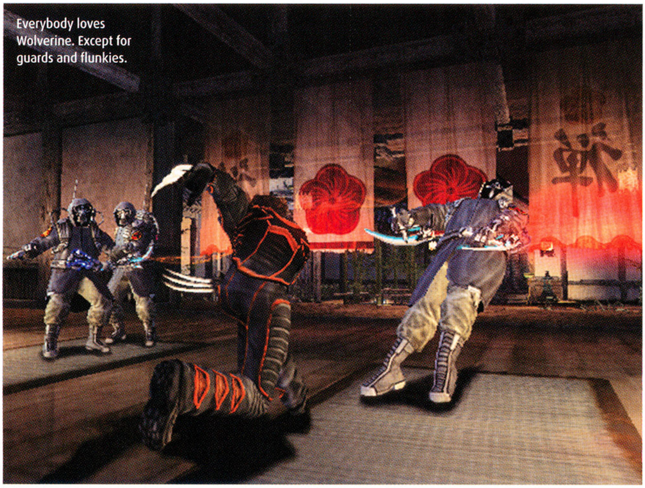
unfortunate absence from the third film. Movie locales such as the Alkali Lake base from *X2* and the Statue of Liberty will join comic-based environments like the Silver Samurai's Japanese headquarters, exemplifying the print/film symbiosis. In addition, heroes and villains from the comics will get a movie-style makeover.

Activision hasn't released any specifics about the DS and GBA versions of X3, other than to say they're developed by Amaze and Way Forward respectively, but with any luck, all three versions will x-ceed x-pectations. —Chris H.





Hopefully Silver Samurai's elevators work.



Everybody loves Wolverine. Except for guards and flunkies.

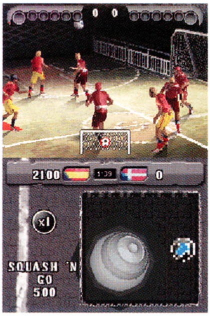
PORTABLE PUNISHMENT

No Mean Feat

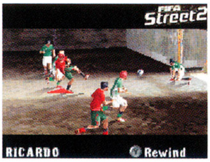
EA's first Street title for the DS takes one-upmanship and fancy footwork to new levels as gamers worldwide hit the pavement for FIFA Street 2.

At the same time that it hits consoles, in late February, FIFA Street 2 will be kicking it freestyle on the Nintendo DS, giving gamers the same type of four-on-four underground soccer experience that they've enjoyed since February 2005's FIFA Street debut. The new title takes trick execution to the extreme with button-combo-enabled moves. The Trick Stick (which is the C Stick in the GCN version) is a virtual Control Stick on the DS touch screen that you can manipulate with your thumb or the stylus. The culmination of your trickery is a showstopping Gamebreaker that can bring the match to an early end.

The console versions feature 10 new FIFA Street locations. The DS version includes those arenas plus an exclusive pitch in Sydney, Australia. —George S.



The touch-screen Trick Stick looks and performs like the GCN Control Stick.



The open-field Nutmeg is a thing of beauty.

Reggie Lays Out Future

Gaming arts to meet marketing smarts at the '06 DICE Summit.

Keep an eye on nintendo.com on February 9 and 10: Nintendo's exec veep Reggie Fils-Aime will be sharing his thoughts at DICE (an annual industry event) on expanding the market for interactive entertainment. When Reggie speaks, the world listens—so stay tuned for his heavy-hitting ideas.

DS Shatters Speed Record

The Nintendo DS leaves previous record-holder GBA choking on its dust.

As '05 came to a close, Nintendo president Satoru Iwata announced that the DS hit five million units sold in Japan faster than any system before it. In addition, four DS titles have surpassed the million-sold mark in Japan: Animal Crossing, Nintendogs, and the two games in the brain-training series (Brain Age and Brain Flex).

MLB 2K6 Gets the AOK

The upcoming baseball season will swing into action on the GCN.

2K Sports has slated Major League Baseball 2K6 for the Nintendo GameCube in early spring. Yankees All-Star shortstop Derek Jeter will step up as the cover athlete for the game, which developer Visual Concepts is enhancing with a new movement system and a ground-breaking morale feature.

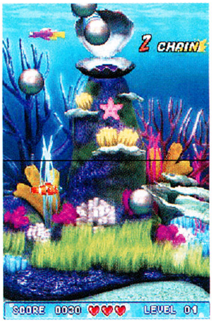
Ice Age 2's Scrat nails a tasty part in the upcoming game.

BRAIN FREEZE!

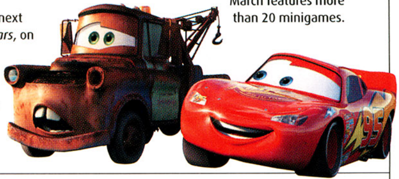
Global Swarming

Computer-generated movies are flooding theaters in 2006 and triggering a wave of game tie-ins for Nintendo systems.

The CG trend will be bigger than ever in 2006, in both movies and their game tie-ins. Starting in March, *Ice Age 2: The Meltdown* will bring its endangered pack of animals back to theaters, and the VU Games version will turn the survival-comedy sequel into an action-adventure for the GCN, DS, and GBA, all likely due around the movie's spring release. *Over the Hedge* from DreamWorks Animation, a flick about forest critters surviving in the suburbs, will leap to the silver screen in May. It's a safe bet that Activision will send its game tie-ins Nintendo's way, though the publisher hasn't revealed specifics yet. Pixar may again have a CG blockbuster on its hands with *Cars*, which follows a championship car as it takes an unexpected detour off the fast track and down old-timey Route 66. THQ will rev up the GCN, DS, and GBA racing-adventure games, all set in an open-world environment, in time for the June release. —Steven G.



Even *Finding Nemo* is getting in on the action: a game sequel due in March features more than 20 minigames.

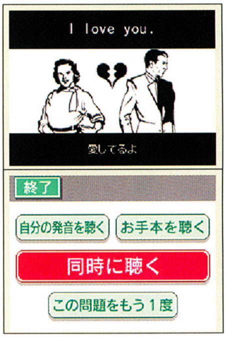


THQ has the next Pixar flick, *Cars*, on track for all three Nintendo systems this summer.

NEWS FROM JAPAN!

Software Untwists Tongues

Nintendo's ever-expanding library of DS software has made the dual-screened device an essential part of nongamers' lives by training their brains and revamping their vocabularies. At the end of January, the latest DS software, Eigo-Zuke, will take on tongues in Japan. Borrowing its title from a phrase about being so totally into a subject that you're "pickled in it," Eigo-Zuke will help users speak and listen to English by immersing them in fun, quirky interactions. After hearing words and phrases, users will repeat them back to the DS via writing with the stylus and speaking into the microphone. Eigo-Zuke will also pickle users in English with fun minigames like crossword puzzles, writing competitions, and (eeeeek!) even a rat-catching game. —Steven G.



I love you.

愛してるよ

IF YOU BUILD IT, THEY WILL COME.

Reach for the Sky

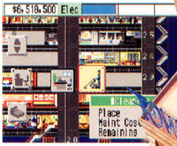
Sega's The Tower SP awakens your inner Donald Trump with a skyscraper-building-and-management simulation for the GBA.

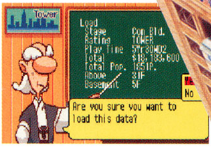
Published by Maxis in the mid '90s, SimTower gave SimCity fans a new outlook on urban development. Rather than building out, gamers were asked to build up, giving their tenants a place to work, live, and dine. The game was developed by Yoot Saito's company, Vivarium, the creators of Seaman and Nintendo's upcoming Odama, and released as The Tower in Japan. This March, it returns as The Tower SP, published by Sega for the GBA.

As the designer and manager of a behemoth on the rise, you oversee every aspect of the building's creation. You can turn it into a low-income housing development, an office complex to end all, or a boutique building with high-priced shops, luxury condos, and fancy restaurants. The goal is to keep building, bring in money, and earn five-star status for your establishment.

Success comes to those who can attract tenants and keep them happy—it's a balancing act between construction costs and rental income. Amenities such as elevators, escalators, saunas, and places to eat, will bring in renters, but debt collectors will pounce if you go over budget. You can also hire security to maintain safety, and a cleaning service to ward away pests.

The first of its kind for the GBA, The Tower SP is sure to satisfy fans of system simulation and empire building. —GEORGE S.





Load
Stage Con Bld.
Rating TOWER
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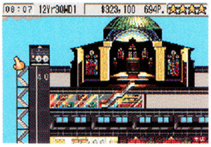
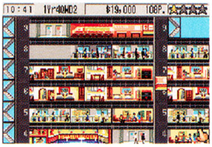
Basement 5F

Are you sure you want to load this data?

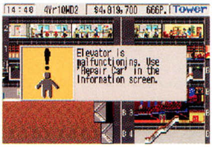
The CEO of your construction company dispenses details on how to get your building off the ground.



New types of installations, such as a cathedral, become available as your building grows.



Occupied offices and apartments bring in a constant stream of revenue for your building project.

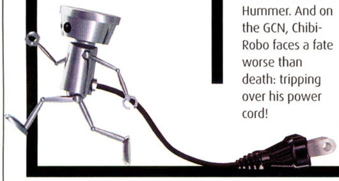


Elevator is malfunctioning. Use 'Repair Car' in the Information screen.

Elevator action—if you fail to maintain your people mover, you may set yourself up for a fall.

DON'T-MISS Calendar

Since when has February been this incredible? Resident Evil rears its head. Sonic hits Mach speed in a new way. And four games vie for the title of Most Insanely Cool Concept of 2006. Bring it on!



2-6

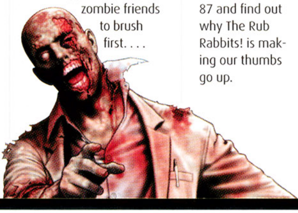
Giant drills and tiny robots!

It's a great day for high-tech hilarity. On the GBA, Drill Dozer gives a rad chick a crazy ride that could dismantle a Hummer. And on the GCN, Chibi-Robo faces a fate worse than death: tripping over his power cord!

2-7

Resident Evil gets touchy-feely on the DS.

If Deadly Silence's stylus-driven knife fights don't grab ya, giving mouth-to-mouth via the mic will! We'd suggest asking your zombie friends to brush first. . . .



2-14

Rub yourself raw with Rabbits.

Does the Feel the Magic follow-up dare to go there? Check out our review on page 87 and find out why The Rub Rabbits! is making our thumbs go up.

2-21

Sonic shreds the cosmic slopes.

The hyper hedgehog has always outrun his competition. But will Sonic Riders outspeed F-Zero and outstyle SSX? One thing's for sure: the blue dude's racer brought old friends out of hiding. Cream the Rabbit? Awesome.

2-27

She's had it with playing helpless.

Joy, rage, gloom, and calm—Peach taps into forces that'd make a Jedi cry when she steps up in Super Princess Peach.

GAME WATCH FORECAST

It's a law of nature: The first games revealed early each year are often movie tie-ins. Why? They're ridin' the coattails of movie previews. And if trailers like X3's didn't get you riled up, seeing the games surface sure should!

Announced
In Development
Ready for Release

Game Title Publisher ●●●
Game Title Publisher ●●● —New games added to the list

NINTENDO GAMECUBE

American Chopper: Full Throttle	Activision	●●●
Barnyard	THQ	●●○
Cars	THQ	●○○
Chibi-Robo	Nintendo	●●●
Curious George	Namco	●●○
FIFA Street 2	EA	●●○
Greg Hastings' Tournament Paintball	Activision	●○○
Harvest Moon: Magical Melody	Natsume	●●○
Ice Age 2: The Meltdown	VU Games	●○○
Kirby*	Nintendo	●●○
The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess	Nintendo	●●○
Major League Baseball 2K6	2K Sports	●○○
Mini-Golf Mayhem	Crave	●○○
The Movies	Activision	●●○
Naruto: Clash of Ninja	Tomy/D3PA	●●○
Naruto: Clash of Ninja 2	Tomy/D3PA	●●○
Odama	Nintendo	●●○
Pac-Man World Rally	Namco	●●○
Rampage: Total Destruction	Midway	●●○
Sonic Riders	Sega	●●○
Starcraft: Ghost	VU Games	●●○
Teen Titans	Majesco	●●○
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon: Advanced Warfighter	Ubisoft	●○○
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell 4*	Ubisoft	●○○
World Championship Poker	Crave	●●○
X3*	Activision	●●○

GAME BOY ADVANCE

Barnyard	THQ	●●○
Cars	THQ	●○○
Curious George	Namco	●●○
Drill Dozer	Nintendo	●●●
Hamtaro: Rainbow Rescue	Nintendo	●○○
Hardcore Pool	Telegames	●●○
Hugo: Bukkazoom	Namco	●●○
Ice Age 2: The Meltdown	VU Games	●○○
The Land Before Time: Into the Mysterious Beyond	American Game Factory	●●●
Legend of the River King Advance	Natsume	●●○
Majesco's Sports Pack	Majesco	●●●
Mega Man Anniversary Collection	Capcom	●●○
Metal Slug	SNK	●●○
Naruto 2*	Tomy/D3PA	●○○
Naruto: Ninja Council	Tomy/D3PA	●●○
Pirate Battle	Orbital	●●○
The Proud Family	Disney	●●○
Santa Claus Saves the Earth	Telegames	●●○
Scurge: Hive	Orbital	●●○
SRS: Street Racing Syndicate	Destination	●●●
Sudoku	Mastiff	●○○
Super Robot Monkey Team Hyperforce Go!	Disney	●○○
Top Spin 2	2K Sports	●●●
Totally Spies!	Atari	●●●
The Tower SP	Sega	●●○
Ultimate Pocket Games	Telegames	●●○
Ultimate Puzzle Games	Telegames	●●○
Ultimate Table Games	Telegames	●●○
World Poker Tour 2K6	2K Sports	●○○
World Reborn	Destination	●●○
X-Bladez: Inline Skater	Crave	●●○
X3*	Activision	●●○
Xyanide	Playlogic	●○○
Yu-Gi-Oh! GX Duel Academy	Konami	●●●

NINTENDO DS

A Boy and His Blob	Majesco	●●○
Age of Empires: The Age of Kings	Majesco	●●●
Barnyard	THQ	●○○
Black & White Creatures	Majesco	●●○
Blades of Thunder 2	SummitSoft	●●●
Boktai*	Konami	●○○
Brain Age: Train Your Brain in Minutes a Day	Nintendo	●●○
Brain Twisting Game Vol. 1*	Aruze	●●○
Cars	THQ	●○○
Children of Mana	Square Enix	●●○
ChoroQ DS	Atlus	●○○
Dragon Quest Monsters*	Square Enix	●○○
Dynasty Warriors*	Koei	●●○
Egg Monster Heroes	Square Enix	●●○
Europa Universalis II	Pocket PC	●●○
FIFA Street 2	EA	●●○
Final Fantasy III	Square Enix	●●○
Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles*	Square Enix	●○○
Finding Nemo: Escape to the Big Blue	THQ	●●○
Fushigi No Dungeon*	Chun Soft	●○○
The Game of Life DS	Atlus	●○○
Golden Nugget Casino DS	Majesco	●●●
Guilty Gear Dust Strikers	Majesco	●●○
Greg Hastings' Tournament Paintball Max'd	Activision	●●●
Harvest Moon DS	Natsume	●●○
Hi Hi Puffy AmiYumi*	D3PA	●○○
Historical Simulation Game*	Koei	●○○
Ice Age 2: The Meltdown	VU Games	●○○
Intern Tendo Dokuta	Spike	●●○
Jam with the Band*	Nintendo	●●○
Johnny Rocketfingers	Conspiracy	●○○
Legend of the River King*	Natsume	●○○
The Legend of Zelda: Four Swords*	Nintendo	●○○
Lizzie McGuire & That's So Raven*	Disney	●●○
Mage Knight: Destiny's Soldier	Namco	●●○
Mah-Jong*	Koei	●○○
Metroid Prime Hunters	Nintendo	●●○
Mini RC Rally	SummitSoft	●●○
Mobile Suit Gundam Seed	Bandai	●○○
Monster Rancher	Tecmo	●○○
Moonlight Fables*	Majesco	●○○
New Super Mario Bros.*	Nintendo	●●○
One Piece	Bandai	●●○
Organizer Plus	SummitSoft	●○○
Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest	Disney	●○○
Quad Desert Fury 2	Majesco	●○○
Resident Evil: Deadly Silence	Capcom	●●○
The Rub Rabbits!	Sega	●●●
Scurge: Hive	Orbital	●●○
Shin Megami Tensei DS*	Atlus	●○○
Slime Morimori Dragon Quest*	Square Enix	●○○
Super Monkey Ball Touch & Roll	Sega	●●●
Super Princess Peach	Nintendo	●●○
Tamagotchi Connection: Corner Shop	Bandai	●●●
Top Gun	Mastiff	●●○
Top Spin 2	2K Sports	●●●
True Swing Golf	Nintendo	●●●
Ultimate Brain Games	Telegames	●○○
Ultimate Card Games	Telegames	●●○
Ultimate Pocket Games	Telegames	●○○
Vandal Hearts*	Konami	●○○
Winx Club	Konami	●○○
World Soccer Winning Eleven*	Konami	●○○
Worms DS	THQ	●●○
X3*	Activision	●●○

* Tentative title

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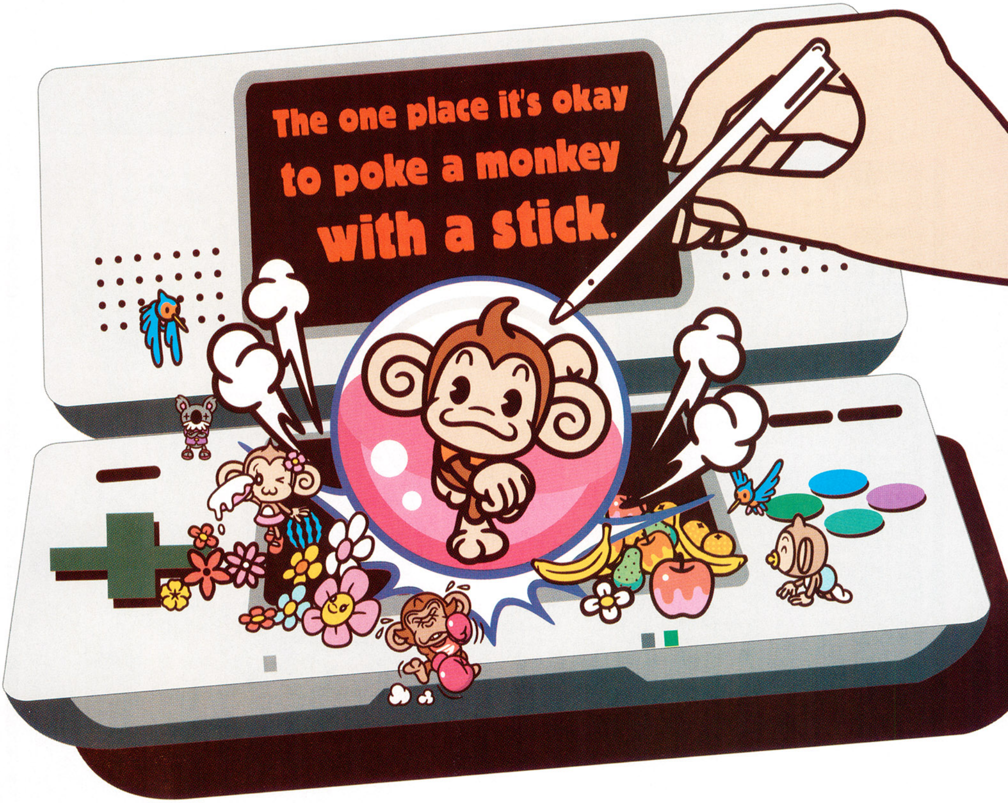
The one place it's okay to poke a monkey with a stick.

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E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Mild Cartoon Violence

NINTENDO DS™

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Worms, Ninjas, and soccer players are unlikely combatants in this issue's preview crop.

FIFA Street 2 Pg. 19
Harvest Moon: Magical Melody Pg. 20
Naruto: Ninja Council Pg. 23
Pokémon Trozei Pg. 22
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Double Agent Pg. 18
Worms: Open Warfare Pg. 23

Double Trouble

>TOM CLANCY'S SPLINTER CELL DOUBLE AGENT

PLATFORM: GCN • PUBLISHER: UBISOFT
DEVELOPER: UBISOFT • RELEASE: SUMMER 2006

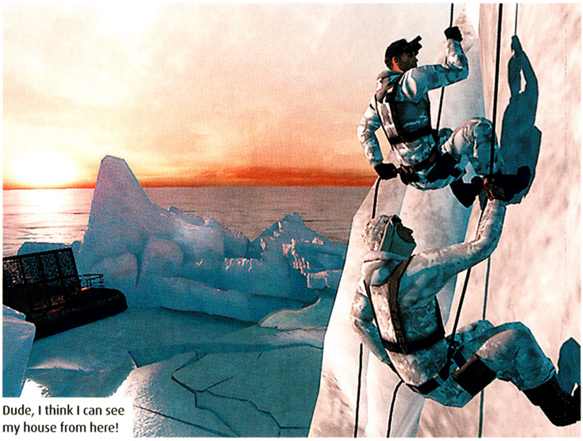
Could the new Splinter Cell be too much for just one man? Not if that man is Sam Fisher. In his newest adventure, Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Double Agent, the renowned spy goes deep undercover to infiltrate a terrorist organization in an attempt to take it down from the inside out. He'll have to balance his position with the terrorist leaders against the urgency of stopping their heinous plot.

Ubisoft expects Double Agent to be one of the most immersive spy action games ever. For one, Fisher's character will be much more in the forefront than in previous Splinter Cell games; his slippery position between good and evil will force him to make split-second life-or death decisions. You will often be asked to complete simultaneous, opposing objectives—it's up to you to choose the right path. As a result, the storyline will change accordingly, and there are multiple endings depending on which direction you take.

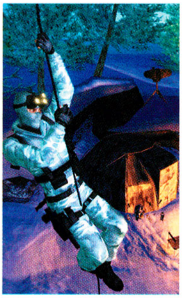
Fisher's missions will send him to exotic locales all over the world, throwing him into extreme situations such as skydiving and underwater missions. And it wouldn't be Splinter Cell without a host of new guns and gadgetry. The dual-agent nature of the story should provide an even greater selection of weapons than ever before, including the NSA's latest supplies, as well an arsenal of deadly black-market weaponry.

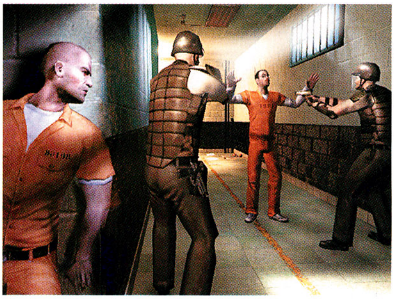
But for all of Splinter Cell's new elements, don't expect the renowned gameplay quality of the franchise to diminish at all. Double Agent promises to maintain the excellent graphics and superior artificial intelligence that has long been associated with the series. To make sure Double Agent fulfills its technological expectations, Ubisoft is using its Montreal, Shanghai, and Annecy, France, development studios to create a game that will maximize the power of the GCN.

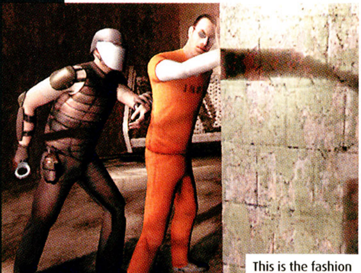
Double Agent will also feature the return of multiplayer modes. Few details have been released thus far, but if Double Agent borrows from its predecessor, Chaos Theory, you can expect at least a well-rounded co-op mode. —CHRIS S.



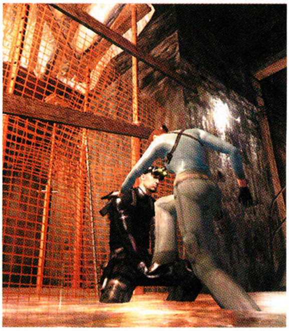
Dude, I think I can see my house from here!







This is the fashion police, and you're under arrest! Orange is *so* 2004!



Cement Mixer

>FIFA STREET 2

PLATFORM: GCN • PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS
DEVELOPER: EA CANADA • RELEASE: FEBRUARY 2006

The concrete-and-hard-contact companion to EA's FIFA Soccer franchise has something to prove in its second outing. Though FIFA Street's inaugural edition was well-received, the game's *Street* experience was stripped down compared to that of its NBA and NFL predecessors. The new title pumps up the street game with more tricks designed to embarrass your competition, and the ultimate soccer show-off move: ball juggling. A dedicated juggling competition (the Skills Challenge mode) allows eight players to take turns dazzling each other with combos that have the ball bouncing off heads, shoulders, ankles, and knees. Juggling moves also figure into the game's four-on-four street matches, providing a new way to build trick points.

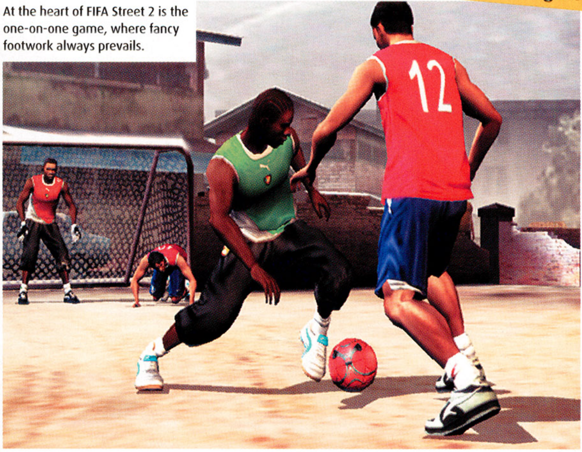
FIFA Street 2's most immediately noticeable change from the original is its shift from the default sideline view of the NBA Street games to the overhead-endzone view of the NFL Street games. You can switch to the traditional FIFA Street side view midmatch by accessing video options. The overall look of the game is similar to that of the first title, but grittier to go along with the mean-streets moves—Trick Stick-enabled jukes, kicks, and spins that stop opponents cold.

In addition to the Kick and Run competitions that challenge you to score more goals than your opponent, there are Beat Battles that award the team that reaches a trick-point quota first, plus three other rule variations. There are multiple modes, too. As in the original FIFA Street, you enter Kick Abouts to build your character's attributes. The new game adds Team Captain mode, which is dedicated to accumulating a killer squad; Underground mode, which has built-up squads facing off; and International mode, a country-based competition for national pride. The teams represent 20 countries and are composed of 320 real-life pros.

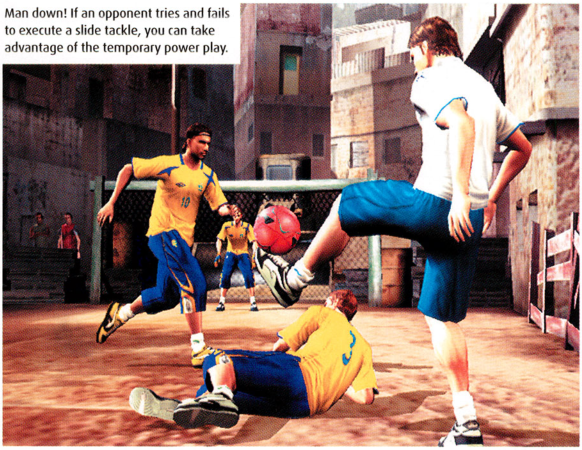
The ultimate moment of every Street game is EA's signature Gamebreaker. FIFA Street 2's take on the staple combines the original game's ultra-powerful blast with a trick-related opportunity to score a one-shot knockout. Unlike the original game's breaker, which you could hold onto while you waited for the perfect chance to score, the sequel's big move gives you just a few seconds of supreme power and trick-executing ability. You've got to weave around defenders using tricks, then send the ball into the goal for a shot that ends the match instantly.

Rounding out the title are three in-game radio stations featuring music that grooves to FIFA's international style. —GEORGE S.

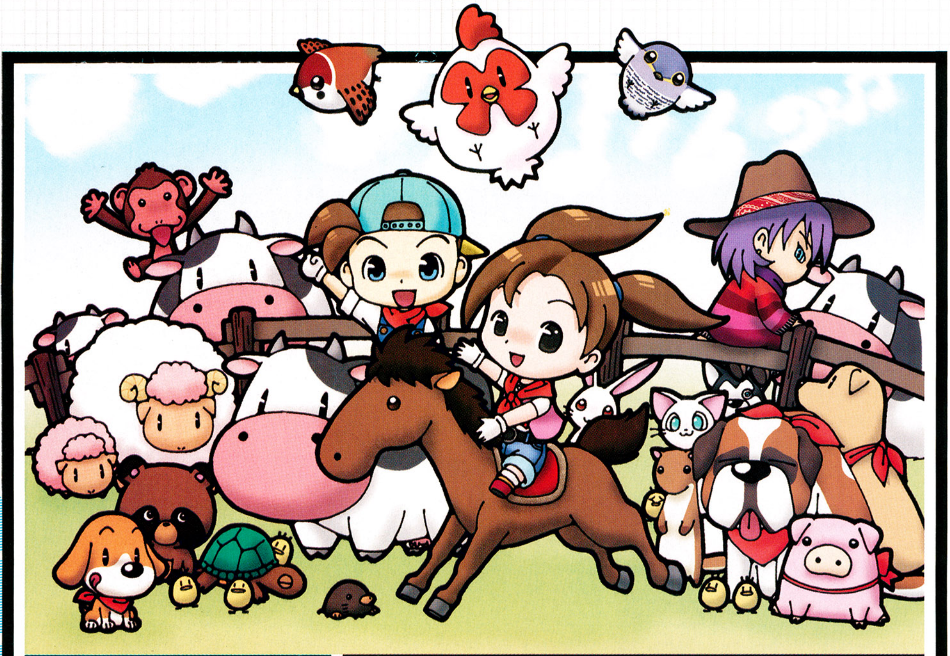
FIFA Street 2's developers are bending over backward to score big with gamers.



At the heart of FIFA Street 2 is the one-on-one game, where fancy footwork always prevails.



Man down! If an opponent tries and fails to execute a slide tackle, you can take advantage of the temporary power play.



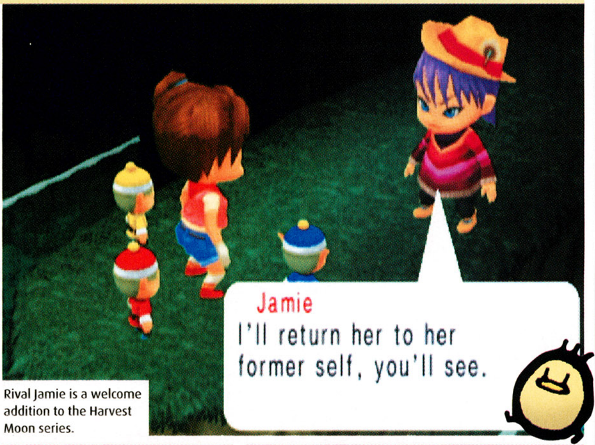
A New Season

>HARVEST MOON: MAGICAL MELODY

PLATFORM: GCN • PUBLISHER: NATSUME
DEVELOPER: MARVELOUS • RELEASE: SPRING 2006

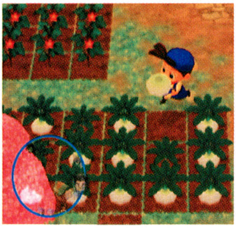
You expect certain things from a Harvest Moon experience: crops, fish, Harvest Sprites, livestock, days, seasons, friends, and marriage. Then there are things that you do not expect, like specific objectives, rivalries, multiple property acquisitions, a multiplayer mode, or even a plot. Magical Melody, however, delivers all these and more, taking the beloved franchise in a new direction while retaining the atmosphere and addictive activities that have defined it.

Right off the bat, Harvest Moon fans will notice that Magical Melody looks and plays quite differently from its GCN predecessors (A Wonderful Life and Another Wonderful Life). The environment and play control have, in fact, been completely revamped for the better. Gone are the realistic graphics and camera controls, both of which seemed unnecessary in the context of Harvest Moon. Instead, you'll find a world reminiscent of the GCN Animal Crossing. The freed-up C Stick now lets you switch between items on the fly, and the Z



Jamie
I'll return her to her former self, you'll see.

Rival Jamie is a welcome addition to the Harvest Moon series.



Button toggles a color-coded environmental overlay so you can view the property lines of Flower Bud Village's farms and stores. (This new feature allows for a more open, natural environment, eliminating the need for an abundance of fences and barriers.)

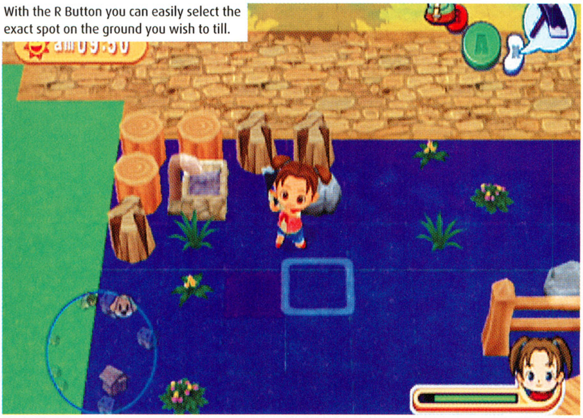
You can begin your life in Flower Bud Village as either a boy or a girl, living on one of three properties—both firsts for the series. Each piece of property has its pros and cons—one is infertile but great for livestock, another is best for planting crops, and the third is out of the way but great for fishing. None of the three lots start you out with much—just a house, a small field, and a handful of tools. As you progress through the game and earn money, you can buy multiple lots, expand your property lines, and construct buildings such as barns and chicken coops.

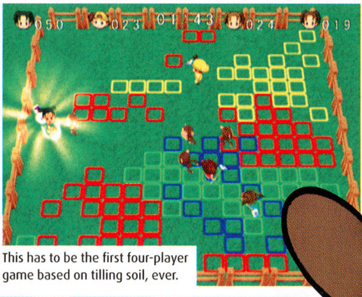
Shortly after you select your gender and home, you'll be thrown into the game's plot as you learn that the Harvest Goddess has turned to stone. The Harvest Sprites need your help collecting musical notes so the goddess can be restored to normalcy. You'll earn the notes simply by experiencing life in Flower Bud Village. When you ship your first item, you'll earn the first Shipping Note; when you cook your first meal, you'll earn the Cooking Note; if you stand still long enough, you'll earn you the Stationary Note. You can earn 100 notes in any order, and for every five notes you acquire, the Harvest Sprites will reward you with a musical instrument.

Restoring the Harvest Goddess is not an easy undertaking. Jamie, your enemy and rival, wishes to beat you to the punch. All of your accomplishments—farming, ranching, fishing, etc.—are stacked up against Jamie's in the game's stat menus, creating a sense of competition as you go about your daily routine. You'll also go up against Jamie during Flower Bud Village's various festivals.

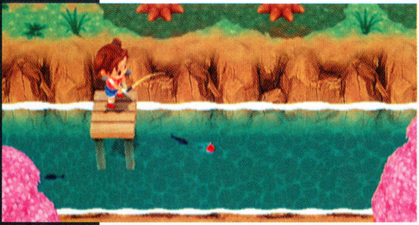
You can forge relationships with the village's residents (apparently even Jamie, who doesn't like you at first) by visiting them frequently and showering them with gifts. Much like in previous Harvest Moon titles, building a relationship with a potential spouse can result in marriage. (There are 10 possible spouses in Magical Melody, whether you play as a boy or as a girl.) New to the series is the option to befriend the village's wild animals—ducks, squirrels, monkeys, sparrows, and even dolphins—in the same way as you can with your human neighbors.

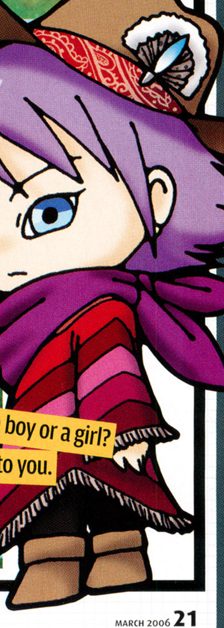
Perhaps the most shocking additions to the Harvest Moon series are the multiplayer minigames (accessible from the game's main menu), which involve activities such as counting animals and attempting to out-dig your opponents. Thankfully, despite Magical Melody's abundance of new features, it remains a Harvest Moon title through and through. —Andy M.


With the R Button you can easily select the exact spot on the ground you wish to till.



This has to be the first four-player game based on tilling soil, ever.




Is your rival a boy or a girl? It's all up to you.

Fine Lines

>POKéMON TROZEI

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS • PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: GENIUS SONORITY • RELEASE: MARCH 2006

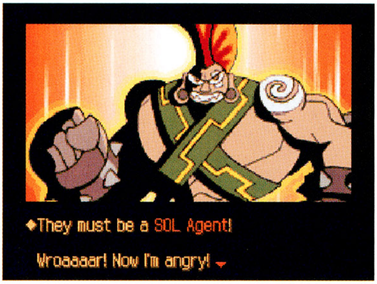
Don't let those adorable Pokémon fool you. On the surface, Pokémon Trozei might look like just another variation on the Tetris theme—make lines of similar items to clear them off the board and see how long you can last—and indeed, there is that element to the game. But there's a lot more to Trozei. Genius Sonority has pulled all the DS tricks out of their developmental hat to redefine the puzzler genre from top to bottom.

The first time you get your hands on Trozei, you might find it kind of easy; lining up Pokémon and triggering combos isn't all that difficult. But the goal isn't simply to clear the board of dancing Pokémon heads; you're also trying to earn as many points as possible by keeping the combo going. It's a lot harder than it looks—the chains occur almost by themselves, and the Pokémon are dumped onto the playfield faster and faster as you progress through the levels. Getting a huge combo score is like trying to create a snowman in the middle of an avalanche—the Pokémon keep piling up faster than you can deal with them. The secret Pokémon are brutally difficult to catch, as well—not only are they incredibly rare, but you must coordinate intricate combos to catch them before they disappear. With so much to keep an eye on, your head will spin.

Pokémon Trozei uses the DS's wireless capabilities in ways we haven't seen before. First, when you are in the middle of a single-player game, another player can invite you to play head-to-head in one of two multiplayer modes. If you choose to join him, Trozei will suspend your current game, and when you and your opponent are through, you'll resume your single-player game precisely where you left off. The concept is so simple and elegant; it's just another example of how the DS seems to bring out the most innovative ideas from its developers.

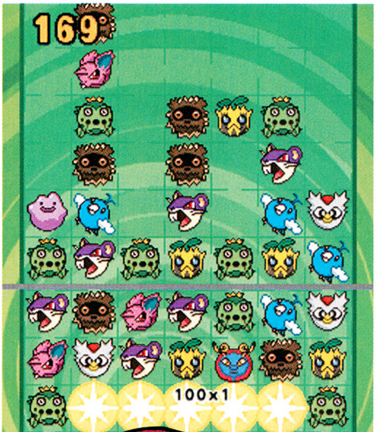
When someone is playing Trozei nearby, you can use the wireless mode to sniff out his Agent Card, which includes a player's handle and gender, and a brief message. You can also use his Agent Card to catch a potentially rare Pokémon. The Agent Cards are stored in your game; the more you collect, the more rare Pokémon you'll be able to catch.

Multiplayer battles have advantages other than the pure enjoyment of burying your opponent in Pokémon. The more you engage in competitions with your friends, the better your chances of finding rare Pokémon when you return to single-player action. And with over 380 Pokémon to catch, you'll need all the help you can get. —CHRIS S.

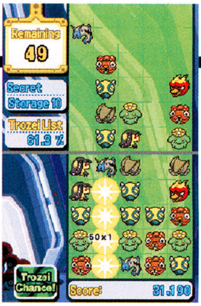


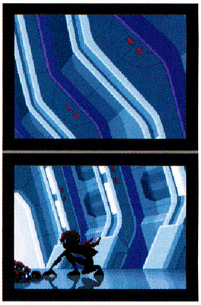
♦They must be a SOL Agent!

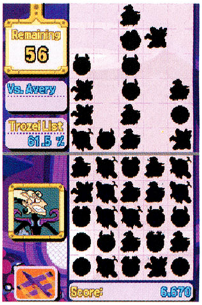
Wroaaaar! Now I'm angry!

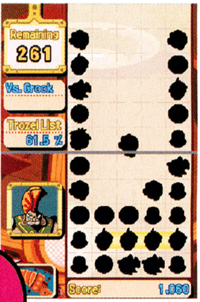


Don't forget—
I'm quite a catch, too!









Enemy bosses will sometimes turn out the lights, forcing you to make matches based on Pokémon silhouettes.

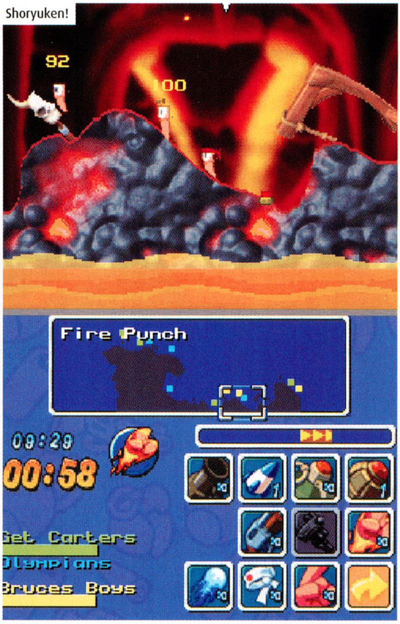
Annelid Anarchy

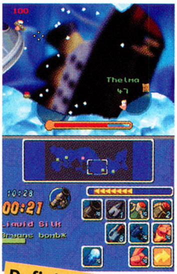
>WORMS: OPEN WARFARE

PLATFORM: DS • PUBLISHER: THQ
DEVELOPER: TEAM 17 • RELEASE: FEBRUARY 2006

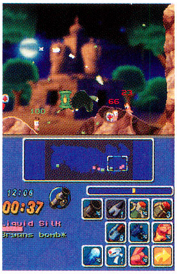
The Worms series has long been a cult favorite among strategy buffs who enjoy a bit of comedy with their warfare. Team 17's tactical hijinks have each player command a battalion of worms armed with heavy ordnance—everything from uzis to exploding sheep—and take turns trying to reduce the opposing army to, well, worm food (in real life, some types of worms are indeed cannibals). The tried-and-true formula hasn't changed much on the DS; the game looks and plays almost identically to its forerunners. Perhaps the biggest addition is that you can now select your weapons via the touch screen. That may not sound like much, but as any Worms veteran will tell you, scrolling through weapons and trying to find the right one while the clock is ticking has been a real pain in previous games. The touch screen also displays a map that you can use to quickly survey the battlefield.

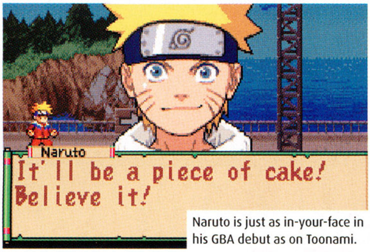
Of course, Worms has always been the most fun when you're blowing away your friends, and Open Warfare is no different—four-player wireless matches are a blast. The default maps are smaller than usual to accommodate quick on-the-go sessions, but you can always customize them for war on a larger scale. —STEVE T.


Shoryuken!



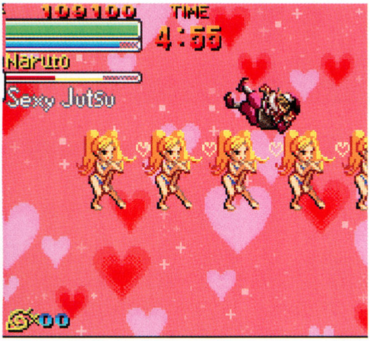
Definitive proof of what sunk *Titanic*.

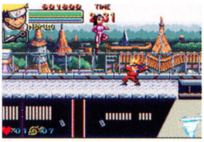


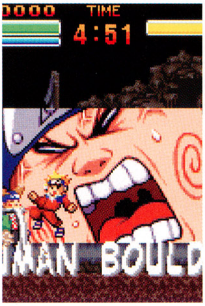


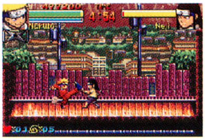
It'll be a piece of cake! Believe it!

Naruto is just as in-your-face in his GBA debut as on Toonami.









Whack and Slash

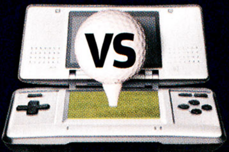
>NARUTO: NINJA COUNCIL

PLATFORM: GBA • PUBLISHER: TOMY/D3PA
DEVELOPER: ARC SYSTEM WORKS • RELEASE: MARCH 2006

After splashing down in Toonami on Cartoon Network last fall, Shonen Jump's series is about to infiltrate the world of gaming. The first GBA title is a speedy, smart-alecky action platformer in which young Naruto runs, crawls, and dashes up walls as he faces seven levels filled with foes. Shurikens and other classic ninja projectiles are part of his arsenal. But the series' claim to fame—over-the-top attacks—are the real stars of the games. Naruto's crazy Sexy Jutsu is a real hoot to watch: scantily clad girls pounce on the field to help. And his foes all have equally mad moves, such as Ino, whose psychic projections put Naruto in a headlock while spirits pummel him, and Choji, who channels his rage at being called tubby to turn into a rolling boulder. You'll also be able to play through the game as Naruto's sensei master Kakashi and as rival Sasuke, a good extra for the franchise's passionate fan base. —STEVEN G.

EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

REAL GOLF

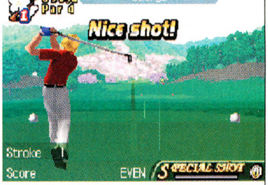


TRUE SWING GOLF

We pit **True Swing Golf** against real golf to see which experience offers the better value, more fun, and less homicidal rage.

By Scott Pelland

Golf is part sport and part obsession. Few of us are truly good at it, and most of the actual time on the links is spent waiting, cursing, and retrieving thrown objects. But the swing—that breathless, extended moment when your muscles bunch and the club head pulls back in a smooth arc, reaches its apex, then descends like swift vengeance to strike the dimpled surface of the ball—that's where all the action is. It's also the primary source of frustration and insanity, because it's wickedly hard to do well. Along comes True Swing Golf for Nintendo DS, with its sweet swing interface that instantly turns the most anemic duffer into a course terror. We have to ask: How does the real game stack up to TSG?



© 2006 Nintendo. In collaboration with the Phoenix Country Club (PHOENIX SEAGAIA RESORT). Photo by Jim Catechi

NINTENDO POWER'S SCOREBOARD

1. Strokes

Real Golf: You'd think the most basic aspect of golf—hitting the ball—would be intuitive and easy. Not so much. The ball is puny, and it just sits there at the end of your club, smug in the knowledge that you're much more likely to hit every square inch of turf surrounding it than to strike the ball itself. In a rational world, all golf clubs would have a face the size of a tennis racket, but the real world is cruel. If you hope to break 100, plan on sinking the price of a car into golf lessons.

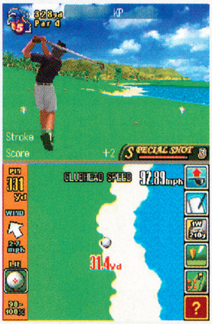
WINNER **True Swing Golf:** See, the name is all wrong for this game, because if it really were True Swing Golf, you'd be just as bad at it as you are at real golf. The name should be something like Dream Swing Golf. You "swing" by sliding the stylus toward the ball on the touch screen, which feels a lot more like real golf than the traditional video game method of watching a meter and timing a button press. But chances are you'll not only hit the ball when you play TSG; you'll clobber it. You'll feel good about yourself, your golf game, and the new car you can now afford to buy since you won't be wasting money on lessons.

Break out the big stick.

2. Links

Real Golf: Yeah, like you're really going to get to play Augusta National or Pebble Beach. Most of us suffer the indignities of hacking away in some rock quarry or toxic waste dump that a developer flattened, mowed, and decided to call Deer Run or Tall Pines. Even if you do manage to get onto a championship course, an intimidating list of rules and steely-eyed course marshals will keep you teetering on the edge of a nervous breakdown.

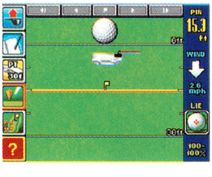
WINNER **True Swing Golf:** You'll find a fabulous selection of links in settings that range from pastoral perfection to desert delectability. You won't have to travel anywhere to play these fine courses, and you can revisit them as often as you please. You can even play a round in your Donald Duck briefs if that's your thing. Try that at Mauna Lani, and they'll throw you in the shark pond.



3. Convenience

Real Golf: Forget about choosing when and where you want to play. What with reserving tee times on overpacked golf courses, the obvious difficulties in playing at night, and upredictable weather conditions, you're lucky to get in a round at all.

WINNER **True Swing Golf:** TSG puts you on the links anytime, anywhere. What better way to spend your commute to school or work than honing your putting skills? You can golf at any hour of the day or night and laugh in the face of Old Man Winter. You can even play TSG on the real golf course while waiting for your tee time.



4. Hazards

Real Golf: If you walk for 18 holes you'll get a good cardio workout. No argument there. But most golf courses require the use of a cart. Carts speed up the game so more golfers can play each day and shell out more greens fees, not to mention extra dough for renting the carts. That's not so healthy for you or your wallet. In fact, the extra stress created by financial concerns and trying to negotiate narrow cart paths is seriously dangerous to your health. There's a reason that the waterways and bunkers are called hazards. Imagine getting conked in the head by a ball and driving your cart into the drink. That can't be good.

WINNER **True Swing Golf:** Admittedly, a good workout with the stylus won't burn a lot of calories, but consider this: You'll be able to complete a round in less than an hour, giving you plenty of extra time to hit the gym for a real workout. And all the money you'll save on greens fees and cart rentals could buy you a fitness-club membership. You'll probably live forever thanks to TSG.

There's no swimming in golf.

5. Comaraderie

Real Golf: One of the worst things about real golf is real golfers—which is to say everyone who's not part of your foursome. They're all jerks. They want to play through. They hit your ball by mistake. They don't replace divots. They take so long to putt that you grow old and die. They try to run you down with their carts. But who can afford a private 18-hole course?

WINNER **True Swing Golf:** You choose who you play with. If you go with the CPU golfers, you'll never hear a curse or have to wait for one of them to run off to the can. If you play LAN mode, you may have to wait for someone taking a potty break, but at least you'll be in a comfortable setting where you can grab a snack or torment the cat. No comparison. TSG wins.

443yd
Par 4
10
Schwartz
+1.1ft
Stroke 3
Score
EVEN
SPECIAL

6. Transcendence

WINNER **Real Golf:** If you hit a monster drive straight and true on a real golf course, or sink a putt from 65 feet uphill with a break to the left, you're going to feel incredible, like winning the lottery, throttling a tiger with your bare hands, or discovering a new continent. There's nothing like it, in fact, which is why people put up with all the expense and frustration of the real game.

True Swing Golf: Chances are you'll hit so many monster drives and magical putts that you'll begin to think you're actually a good golfer. Not so, of course. You'll still stink up the real links, but while you're out there searching for your ball in the knee-high rough or desperately trying to resuscitate the squirrel you knocked senseless on the back nine, you can remember how once—in a world called True Swing Golf—you ruled!

Is that a Titleist or a bear turd?

POINT COUNTER POINT

STEVE T.
STEVEN G.

>What's the ultimate game idea for the Revolution controller?

The Steves butt heads about the game-design possibilities of the Big N's latest and greatest device.

STEVE T: The game I most want to play with the Revolution controller is an atmospheric survival-horror title. Using the controller as a flashlight to illuminate a dark alley or abandoned mental hospital could be completely engrossing. Of course, if you're easily startled, like Steven, it might be difficult to keep the controller pointed at the screen as you're flailing your arms in terror.

"Using the controller as a flashlight to illuminate a dark alley or abandoned mental hospital could be completely engrossing."

—Steve T.

STEVEN G: Uh, we're talking ULTIMATE ideas here, not merely good ideas. So man up and replace that flashlight with a jousting lance! Staring down fear is x100 scary when rushing toward a knight on horseback. Imagine sticking that lance in at just the right point, and skewering him through the rib cage!

STEVE T: Such barbarism. Some of us are a bit more cultured; I, for one, would prefer a game where I'm using the controller to conduct an orchestra. Or getting my groove on with Samba de Amigo, using two controllers as a pair of maracas. But that would require the ability to enjoy something that doesn't involve stabbing people.

"No matter what we arm chair developers think up, it's mad geniuses like Suda 51 who may truly shock us . . ."

—Steven G.

STEVEN G: Maybe what you seek is a tea-drinking sim. Maybe the controller would lift your pinky finger to *just* the right elevation. . . . OK, if jousting is too caveman for you, maybe fencing is actually better. More movement strategy, but still superbrutal.

STEVE T: Hey, I've got an idea! How about a game where you pick up various blunt objects strewn about the environment and use them to bludgeon Steven Grimm by swinging the controller?

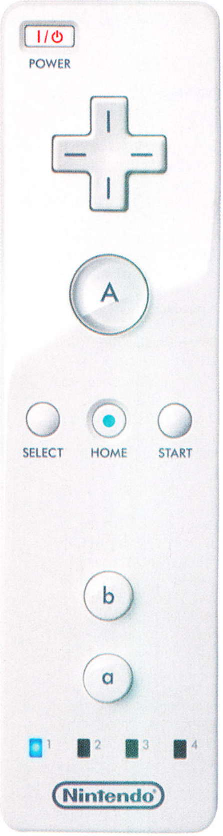
STEVEN G: Petty jab aside, I think you might be onto something. Remember the excellent Second Sight? How about a psychic game where you latch onto an object by jabbing your controller at it, throwing it like casting out a fishing line then guiding its flight?

STEVE T: Here's one: the controller is perfect for moving and positioning your troops in a real-time strategy game. It may not be the sexiest idea, but it would make games like StarCraft a lot less frustrating on consoles.

STEVEN G: Agreed! Console RTS games haven't been able to surpass PC-mouse control, and the Revolution controller would totally solve that. Better yet, if Peter Molyneux could bring his Black & White series to the Revolution, I'd be in heaven. RTS control. Petting your divine pet (or smacking around your evil pet). Spellcasting with flicks of the wrist.

STEVE T: Anything from Peter Molyneux would be cool, for that matter. I really want to see what some of the more-creative developers like him can do with the controller. Maybe Suda 51 of Killer 7 fame can make a crazy adventure game that constantly throws different uses for the controller at you.

STEVEN G: I'll second that. No matter what we armchair developers think up, it's mad geniuses like Suda 51 who may truly shock us with the controller. But would people play a Jack the Ripper game? Hmm. Dress that slash-and-dash idea up in Solid Snake camouflage, and I think I've arrived at a winner! Calling Kojima . . . Mr. Hideo Kojima?



The Revolution controller: great for playing fencing games or fencing in real life. We're sure it's durable enough.

"Whoa. I just shattered Steven Grimm's sternum with a petrified wombat. Awesome!"

BREAKING THE MOLD

For discerning game enthusiasts— those who shy away from cookie-cutter sequels and status quo action bonanzas—the pickings can be brutally slim at times. But a coming crop of inspired, unusual, and surprising titles will make anyone looking for an original playing experience take notice. Let NP be your guide for **a tour of the unexpected.**

Short Circuit

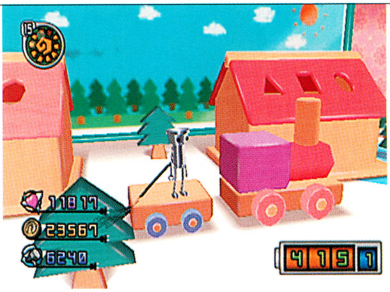
An adventure of enormous proportions awaits in Chibi-Robo! There's more to this toy story than meets the eye.

By Chris Hoffman

An intergalactic superhero dressed like a rooster. A militant company of eggs. A wisecracking dinosaur. From the colorful characters alone, it's easy to tell that Chibi-Robo isn't exactly a typical GCN adventure game. At only three inches tall, Chibi-Robo isn't a normal game hero either: Instead of fighting evil, he focuses on making people happy. But before his mission is over, he'll reunite a family, travel through time, and even consort with aliens.

Thrilling You with Kindness

It's often said that heroes are made, not born. In the case of Chibi-Robo, it's especially true—the three-inch-tall robot was built, sold, then given to eight-year-old Jenny Sanderson as a birthday gift by her unemployed, toy-loving father. Aided by his manager, Telly, Chibi has two simple goals: to make his new family happy through whatever means he can, and, by doing so, to achieve the number-one rank of Super Chibi-Robo. Spreading joy and happiness is the name of the game; it's a far cry from the usual video game plot of stopping the bad guys and saving the world.



Chibi-Robo is a small hero in a big world. Not many video game stars can travel by toy train.

"It is impossible to create perfectly original content," states Kenichi Nishi, the director of Chibi-Robo. "But I always try to create something different from others with my creation. I'd be very disappointed if I played a game and could not feel anything fresh. For example, if there is a scene where using character A would make it seem totally ordinary, then I purposefully use unexpected character B instead. I always think about the standard, orthodox method first. Then, I try to crash it, twist it, or create a totally different direction."

Such a sentiment is no surprise coming from the designer of Incredible Crisis, a PlayStation game that focused on an ordinary family being pulled into all manner of crazy situations. Skip, the development company behind Chibi-Robo, also has the role-playing game Giftpia on its resume; the title was deemed so trippy that it never came out in North America. Chibi-Robo, however, is much more accessible than the aforementioned titles. After Nintendo took over publishing duties on the game, legendary game creator Shigeru Miyamoto helped enhance its unique outlook by suggesting refinements to the play mechanics and other details.

"I was told that Mr. Miyamoto liked the Chibi-Robo character," Nishi notes, "and [producer] Mr. [Kensuke] Tanabe recommended this project to him. After the actual collaboration started, he gave

> **"I always think about the standard, orthodox method first. Then, I try to . . . create a totally different direction."**
>
> **—Kenichi Nishi, Director, Skip**

EVERYONE 10+ E 10+ CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

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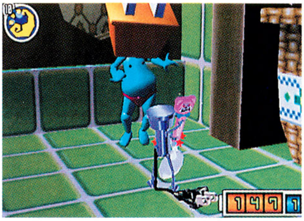
Dang robots, get off my lawn!

me a bit of direction and advice. I am very impressed that Mr. Miyamoto always takes everything seriously."

The combination of Miyamoto's sensibilities and Skip's penchant for innovation results in a game of literally humongous proportions. The tiny Chibi finds himself in a world of giants where dressers and tables tower overhead, and rats are unstoppable beasts; soda cans are bigger than Chibi is. Just ascending the kitchen counter is an effort: Chibi must climb from drawer handle to drawer handle to reach the top—then quickly find an outlet to plug into so his battery doesn't run out. But overcoming such obstacles is necessary for Chibi to earn Happy Points and accomplish his objectives. Initially he must rely on simple tasks like throwing away food wrappers and cleaning stains to generate warm, fuzzy feelings, but as the adventure progresses, he'll discover much more to do—like helping the members of the household deal with their personal problems.


Meet Mr. Prongs. He's plump, he's blue, and he's wearing a pink bikini. And he dances.

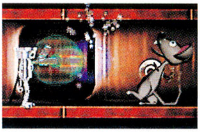
The Sanderson Family

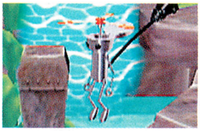
Between Mr. Sanderson's unwillingness to find a new job, Mrs. Sanderson's perpetual stress, and their daughter Jenny's belief that she's a frog, it's amazing this family isn't even more dysfunctional.

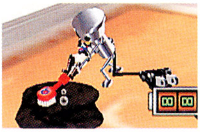
TOOL TIME

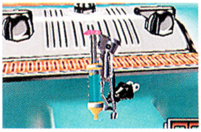
GEAR UP!

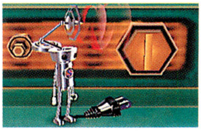
To succeed in his mission to make the Sandersons happy, Chibi-Robo will need to power up with helpful gadgets called Chibi-Gear. In addition to the gizmos shown below, Chibi will also acquire a spoon (for digging, naturally) and a mug that he can wear as a shield.


Chibi-Blaster: This low-powered sonic weapon can be purchased from the online store in the Chibi-House. Used for combat and opening secret routes.


Chibi-Copter: The copter pops out of Chibi-Robo's head, as if he were a miniature Inspector Gadget. It comes standard in all Chibi-Robos.


Toothbrush: The toothbrush is used for cleaning spills and stains. Mr. Sanderson won't want to put this back in his mouth once Chibi's done with it.


Squirter: Chibi-Robo can use the squirter to suck liquid up, then squirt it back out. Try squirting characters with various liquids to get their reactions.


Chibi-Radar: The radar helps locate hidden objects, such as invisible Chibi-Doors. It's also the key to one of the game's biggest secrets.

The One with the Most Toys Wins

Of course, if Chibi-Robo had known what a dysfunctional family he'd be thrust into, he might never have left his Chibi-House. Jenny is completely withdrawn and spends her life wearing a frog costume, communicating only with a "ribbit" or two. Mr. Sanderson just lies around the house all day, more concerned with collecting toys and memorabilia from his favorite TV show, *Space Hunter Drake Redcrest*, than finding a job. As a result, Mrs. Sanderson is completely stressed out about her life and her finances and often seems to be on the verge of a nervous breakdown. She even gets flustered because the family dog, Tao, habitually tracks mud all over the house.

In addition to the family, the Sanderson house is populated by a collection of eccentric toys that magically spring to life when the Sandersons aren't watching. "Because Chibi is only 10 cm tall, humans are too big to interact with and create all the drama," Nishi comments. "And it is important to have some fantasy element in it—moving toys are very unusual. It is also true that I simply wanted to create toys."

The quirky cast of sentient, problem-plagued playthings includes an action figure based on the heroic Space Hunter Drake Redcrest; a group of egg soldiers called the Free Rangers; Funky Phil, a dancing flower; Sunshine, a teddy bear with severe mood swings; Plankbeard, a pirate carved out of wood; Dinah, a tyrannosaurus rex built from construction blocks who thinks she's a stand-up comic; Princess Pitts, who resides high atop her toy castle; and Mort, a mummy whose grotesque appearance belies a kind heart.

"Mort is my favorite," admits Nishi. "I was trying to create a Beauty and the Beast kind of image between Mort and Princess Pitts. I believe that idea worked well."

Thanks to Chibi-Robo's day-night cycle, the toys often seem more real and alive than NPCs in other games. The unusual characters can be found in different locations and doing different things (or reverting to inanimate toy form if the Sandersons are around) depending on whether it's day or night, and each new day can trigger new events that add further depth to each character's tale.

Tied in to all the playroom pathos is a group of pint-sized extraterrestrials. Exactly how do these visitors fit into the bizarre puzzle? That's up to Chibi-Robo to figure out.

Space Hunter Drake Redcrest & Sophie

Drake Redcrest is a galactic hero and self-appointed defender of the living room. Sophie, a plush worm, has gone gaga over Drake.

TINY TUNES

BREAKING THE SOUND BARRIER

It isn't just Chibi-Robo's gameplay and characters that make it unique. The game also features exceptional sound design that blurs the line between music and sound effects. We spoke to sound designer Hirofumi Taniguchi of Skip to find out what went into Chibi-Robo's innovative audio.

Nintendo Power: What was your philosophy for Chibi-Robo's sound design?

Hirofumi Taniguchi: My starting point for music in this game was that even sound effects should be musical. I also tried to drive people's emotions subconsciously through the environmental sounds rather than being straightforward. It is important for me how much additional fun I can add through those concepts. I tried to create unique sound patterns as much as I could for each character's sound effects and even for general sound effects. I tried to put in interesting elements that can make people laugh or grin.

All system sounds [such as menu-selection sounds] were created by voices. It is an effective way of differentiating the game from other games. I am very good at creating effect-like sounds with my mouth.

NP: Why did you assign musical sounds to Chibi's actions instead of using traditional music throughout the game?

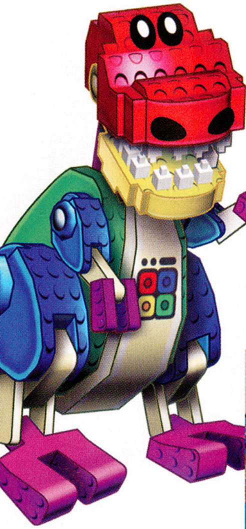
HT: All of Chibi-Robo's action sounds were sound effects that were created by "phrasing" (dividing the synthetic musical sounds into phrases). I also decided to use sounds of woodwind instruments and brass instruments instead of electronic sounds. People naturally think of a robot generating electronic sounds, but Chibi's actions are not ordinary robotlike actions, and I don't think it is interesting to use only electronic sounds. But if I excluded all electronic sounds, it would eliminate the robotic aspect of Chibi. Therefore, I kept electronic sounds for some of his actions, such as landing and climbing. I only chose mechanical sounds for specific situations.

You'll notice different background music for day and night. I arranged the phrasing to match the different music. The reason the background music does not have a melody is because Chibi's footsteps create a melody at random. Therefore, the tempo of his footsteps matches the tempo of the music. When Chibi carries his plug (and moves faster), the tempo of the music becomes faster. All those sound-design choices are intended to be unobtrusive to the player. My goal is to create sounds and music that bring experiences and impressions that are somehow comforting to players.

For the Chibi-Gear—the toothbrush, spoon, Chibi-Radar, and squirter—I used a different approach than what I stated previously. These sounds stand out more independently. In order to grab players' attention, the music stops when those items' sounds occur.

NP: What made you include such a diverse array of music?

HT: I wanted to create music to enhance each character, and I tried to use a variety of musical genres as much as I could. Of course, I didn't want the sounds to be too widely scattered. How much I could utilize the motif of each character or event was key for choosing the music.

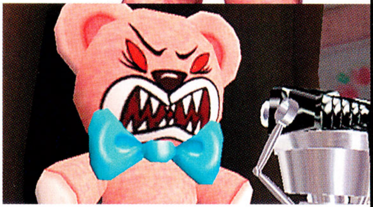


Funky Phil & Dinah

An odd couple if there ever was one. Dinah the construction-block dinosaur may be an old-timer, but she still enjoys seeing Funky Phil shake his groove thing.

Sunshine

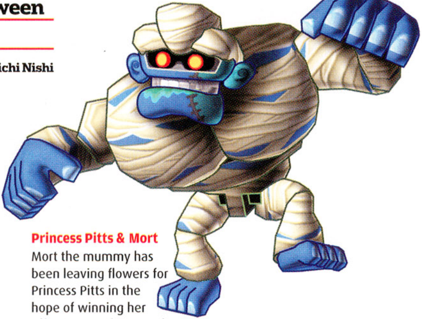
Sunshine may look cuddly and sweet, but he harbors a disturbing nectar addiction that can send him into a violent rage.



The Free Rangers

This hard-boiled group of militant eggs is in constant training to defeat the Sandersons' dog, Tao, but some of the Rangers would rather go AWOL to follow their dreams.

> "I was trying to create a Beauty and the Beast kind of image between Mort and Princess Pitts."
>
> —Kenichi Nishi



Princess Pitts & Mort

Mort the mummy has been leaving flowers for Princess Pitts in the hope of winning her affections. Unfortunately, the princess can't cope with frightening things.

Plankbeard

Salty seadog Plankbeard isn't half as evil as he'd like to be. He wants to go sailing off in his long-lost pirate ship, the *Scurvy Splinter*.

It's a Big World After All

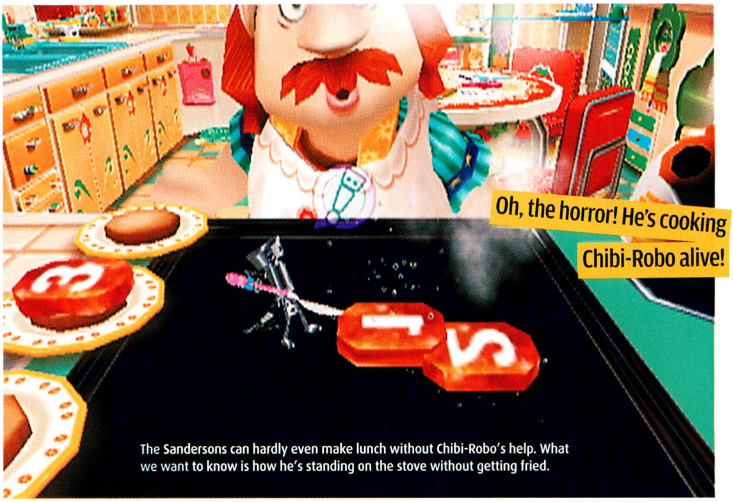
With each task Chibi completes—whether solving a personal crisis, giving someone a gift, or merely wiping up a spill—he'll be rewarded with moolah (the game's money) and Happy Points, which cause his rank to increase. Moolah lets Chibi buy goods at the Chibi-Store, while significant rank increases grant him more-powerful batteries to let him venture farther and perform more actions without running out of juice. In effect, the more Chibi makes people happy, the more the house opens up and the more there is to explore.

Every new room presents a wealth of possibilities. Skyscraperlike shelves invite exploration in the living room; the stairs in the foyer challenge you to climb them; tiny doors near the ceiling of the master bedroom seem impossibly out of reach; and what's the deal with that big inert robot in the basement? When you look around each room (preferably in first-person Chibi-Vision) and see all the seemingly unattainable items and unreachable locations, the mind reels with questions. What secrets are hiding on top of the bookcase? How do you get that ring in the cupboard? What's the trick to getting onto the roof? Often creative thinking is all you need to turn an innocuous piece of furniture into a platforming adventure: Hop up some boxes, climb a dangling purse strap, and maneuver from shelf to shelf to reach your destination.

When piecing together a platforming puzzle isn't enough, however, you'll need to obtain some new equipment—such as Chibi-Gear and Utilibots. During his exploits, Chibi-Robo will acquire seven types of Chibi-Gear, including a brush for cleaning up messes, the Chibi-Copter for hovering down from high places or over small gaps, and the Chibi-Blaster, which is essential for opening secret passages and destroying the robotic Spydorz that materialize periodically. Hey, even a nice guy like Chibi-Robo can fight when the situation warrants it. Besides, the scrap of defeated Spydorz can be recycled into Utilibots—robots that function as ladders, bridges, or teleportation devices, thereby opening up even more of the world for exploration.

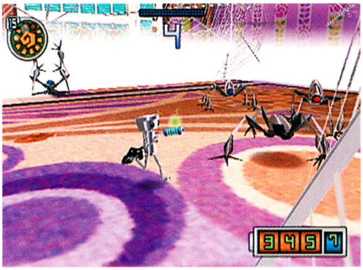
Chibi can also obtain various costumes to help with his endeavors. Among them are a Drake Redcrest suit that lets him embody the forces of justice, pajamas that allow him to fall asleep and quickly change the time from day to night and vice versa, and a ghost outfit that lets him spook unsuspecting housemates.

Along with all the exploration, trouble-solving, and gadget use, Chibi will get the chance to participate in a number of minigames. Between playing a game of "chicken" with toy cars, helping Mr. Sanderson cook burgers, charging through an obstacle course with the Free Rangers, dancing with frogs, shooting targets from a spaceship, and more, Chibi has plenty of opportunities to earn extra Happy Points—and most minigames help him complete other goals, as well.



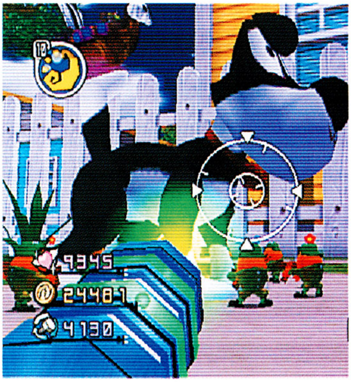
Oh, the horror! He's cooking Chibi-Robo alive!

The Sandersons can hardly even make lunch without Chibi-Robo's help. What we want to know is how he's standing on the stove without getting fried.



There aren't many bad guys in Chibi-Robo, but when the Spydorz show up, Chibi has no choice but to fight. The ones seen here are the extra-burly variety.

> "There's nothing surprising for people if the game looks cheerful and the experience is cheerful."
>
> —Kenichi Nishi



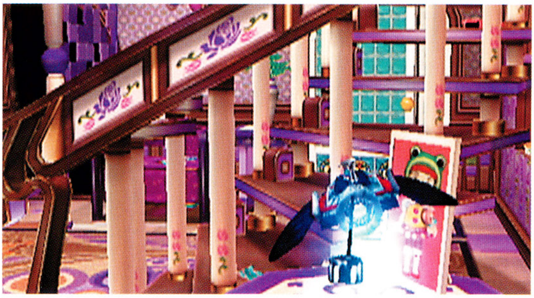
Chibi-Metroid? Other popular GCN games evidently had an impact on some aspects of Chibi-Robo.

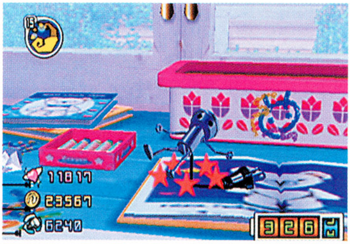
Making It Personal

Just when you think you've got Chibi-Robo figured out and you're coming to grips with the crazy characters, unique environments, and distinctly happy attitude, the game at times reveals a serious side beneath the zany cuteness. Topics like divorce, loneliness, pollution, loss, and more get cast as the game's antagonists, and they're made all the more powerful by the wacky antics that precede them.

"If we only concentrate on cheerful fun, we'll lose depth. There's nothing surprising for people if the game looks cheerful and the experience is cheerful," explains Nishi. "There are no surprises or unexpected things. Also, there are many games or movies about the end of the world or a crisis of humankind. I think people already have a tolerance to those kinds of things and are desensitized in a sense. Divorce is a very personal thing, and something that has less impact when we compare it to the end of the world. However, it is an extremely serious thing for people themselves. Instead of bringing in more-cataclysmic things to give more stimuli to players, I thought it was more effective to bring in more-ordinary things to enhance the adventure in daily life."

Like any good hero, however, Chibi-Robo has the potential to overcome his enemies, even when they're as intangible as marital strife and grief. By using his smarts, his gear, and his innate abilities—and by figuring out how to travel into the past to unlock the secrets of the present (hint: extraterrestrial beings are involved)—Chibi can achieve his dreams of making the Sandersons happy and becoming Super Chibi-Robo. Better yet, Chibi may even grant gamers' wishes for a thoughtful adventure that carves a niche all its own.


Chibi-Robo will have several chances during his adventure to play minigames, including a toy spaceship game where he flies around the foyer and tries to blast targets.



Listen up! You can get Chibi-Robo's attention by speaking to him via the GCN microphone. You'll startle the little fella if you talk too loud, however.

BAD, BAD BOT

The Top 5 Things You Can't Do In Chibi-Robo

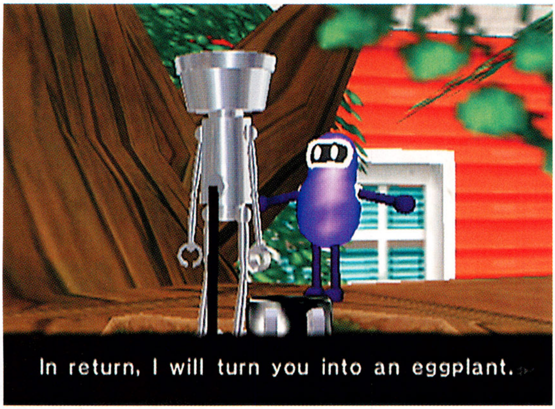
5. Put thumbtacks on the couch just before dad sits down

4. Go on a drinking binge and devolve from Chibi-Robo to Chibi-Hobo

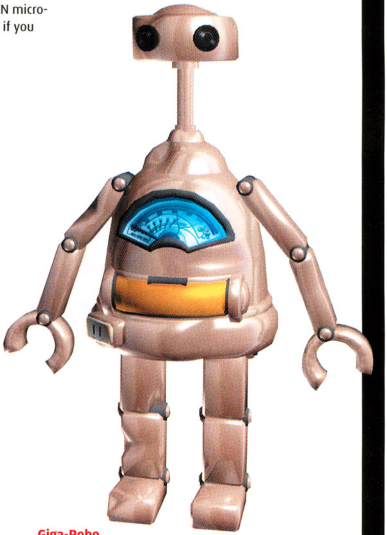
3. Use all of the Sandersons' toilet paper for kindling

2. Strangle Sunshine the bear with Chibi's power cord

1. Lead a robot uprising and enslave the human oppressors


In return, I will turn you into an eggplant.

Hardcore Nintendo fans will notice Kid Eggplant's uncanny resemblance to Eggplant Man, who was immortalized as a trophy in Super Smash Bros. Melee.


Giga-Robo
The massive Giga-Robo sits dormant in the Sandersons' basement, thanks to his massive power requirements. Can he be saved from the scrap heap?

Heavy Metal

The collision between warfare and pinball positions Yoot Saito's Odama far away from the gaming norm.

By Andy Myers

Ever wanted to roll a giant metal ball around a battlefield, crushing all who stand in your path? In Odama, a bizarre new GCN title from mastermind Yoot Saito (the man responsible for the equally bizarre Seaman for Sega Dreamcast), you can. Odama rolls familiar elements such as pinball, real-time strategy warfare, and voice-responsive gameplay into one crazy-inventive game that will test your wits like no other.

EVERYONE 10+ E 10+ CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

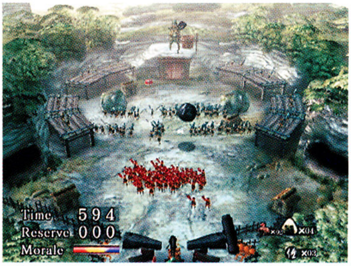
Monster Ball

There's not a peaceful moment in Odama's war-torn world. As military strategist Kagetora, you've secretly inherited the mystical Odama ball from your father, Lord Yamanouchi, who took his own life after being betrayed by his most trusted ally. Now, in the year 1539, you must unleash the Odama ball on the battlefield to crush your enemies and avenge your father's death. The ultimate goal in Odama is to transport a treasured family heirloom known as the Ninten Bell (you'll notice lots of quirky Nintendo references strewn throughout the game) to Karasuma Keep, an act that will return peace to the ravaged land.

Somehow, this feudal-Japanese war story lives under the umbrella of pinball gameplay as you bash your sacred Odama ball about the game's 11 unique battlefields. Each area presents new obstacles for you and your army to overcome, such as closing floodgates, rolling boulders, moving statues, and knocking over barriers to create passageways. But before anything is achieved in Odama, the environment and the soldiers in it will suffer much damage—the Odama ball does not play favorites, and you must control it as best you can to minimize casualties to your own army.

Unfortunately, avoiding your own troops is not always possible while flinging the Odama ball around the battlefield. Sometimes you'll have to make sacrifices so the Odama can hit its mark, which will not always be enemy units. Houses and trees, when destroyed by the Odama, will sometimes uncover power-ups that aid your cause. One such power-up turns the Odama ball a glowing green, enabling it to steal the souls of its victims while your troops have temporary immunity to the giant sphere's wrath.

The Ninten Bell is one of Odama's many oddities.



HOT MIC!

INSPIRING THE MASSES

Odama's hectic atmosphere gets even crazier when it comes time to command your troops. To make sure you have all you need to play out of the box, Nintendo will include a GCN microphone with every Odama game disc, as well as a handy microphone clip that allows you to attach the peripheral directly to a standard GCN controller. (Don't worry—WaveBirds work too.)

March Left!
Company, Halt!
Flank and Destroy!
Advance!
They'll never take . . . our freedom!

© 2006 Nintendo / VIVARIUM

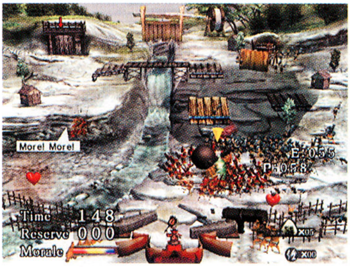
War Games

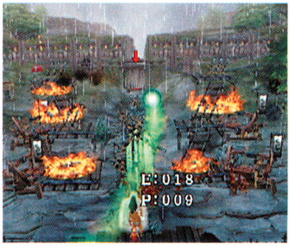
Odama's destructive pinball action only cracks the surface of the game's multilayered play mechanics—commanding units successfully is the real challenge. Your troops' primary objective is always to see the Ninten Bell safely to the other side of the battlefield. If enemy units manage to push the bell back into your territory, you lose; but if you can force the bell into enemy territory before time runs out, you win.

Odama's microphone will help you achieve victory as you bark out commands that you've learned along your journey. "March left!," for instance, will order your troops to change the trajectory of the bell's movement, while "Flank and destroy!" will command your units to organize and attack an enemy group from both sides, and "Press forward!" will encourage your units to give their all and push the Ninten Bell through enemy forces toward the goal. You can learn 11 commands, and your troops' morale (denoted by an in-game meter) will change based on how honorably you use the commands. For instance: if you're constantly ordering your troops to press forward when they do not have the manpower to do so, their morale will lower and they'll begin to question your authority rather than acting out your orders immediately.

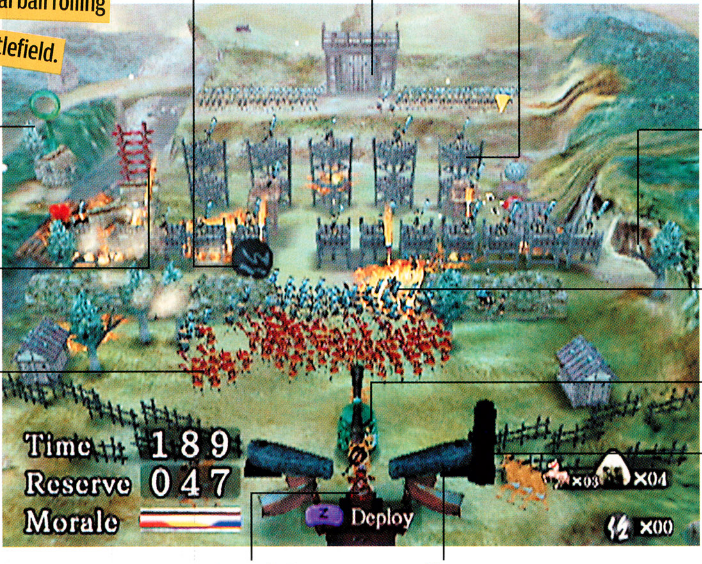
"Rally!" is a command that you will use often to move your troops to a certain point on the battlefield to achieve a specific task such as picking up a key, capturing a set of flippers that's under enemy control, or swarming a giant boss. The levels in Odama vary wildly, and you'll need equally varied tactics to master them all.

Voice commands are integral, but you'll also use plenty of non-microphone tactics. Flinging the Odama ball at the Ninten Bell, for instance, will often create a deafening tone that immobilizes nearby enemies, and launching a Rice Ball from your base can distract hungry enemy soldiers just long enough for your troops to move the Ninten Bell a bit farther. Everything you do in Odama, whether it's with the pinball flippers or with your voice, will affect your army's progress. It's this marriage between the chaotic action of pinball and the precision of commanding units that makes Odama what it is: challenging, humorous, mysterious, and unlike anything you've played before.





War is hell, especially with a two-ton metal ball rolling around the battlefield.



Odama Ball
The Odama ball destroys all in its path.

Gate
Passing through the gate with the Ninten Bell means victory.

Enemy Archers
The archers will fire away until knocked down by the Odama.

Key
Collecting keys with the Odama can sometimes unlock secrets.

Ladder
In Kuruwa Plains II, you must rally your troops to a ladder in order to reach the gate.

Your Troops
Red troops are yours—try not to crush too many.

Secret Cave
Finding secret areas will uncover extra power-ups and new voice commands.

Enemy Troops
Enemy units will attempt to stop the Ninten Bell's progress.

Ninten Bell
The Ninten Bell must be protected at all costs.

Cannon
The cannon can be used to fire Rice Balls into the battlefield.

Commander Kagetora
As commander, you manage your army from this point.

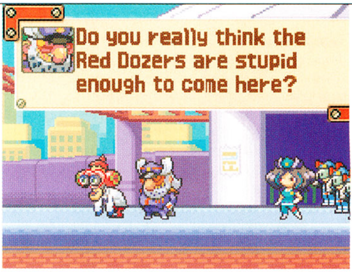
Flippers
Three of your strongest soldiers will man each flipper.

Daily Grind

Lock your doors and hide the jewelry—the criminal brains in Drill Dozer are coming to a Game Boy Advance near you.

By Chris Shepperd

Welcome to Metal City, where things aren't always what they seem. The cat burglars are a good-natured crew, the police department seems a little sketchy, and the Skullkers . . . well, they're downright bad. That's how it goes in Drill Dozer, a colorful twist on the platforming genre with a brilliant narrative and excellent gameplay mechanics. Drill Dozer sparkles with creativity.

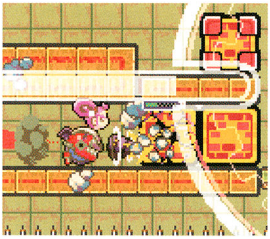

Do you really think the Red Dozers are stupid enough to come here?

Croog and Detective Carrie might play you for the dummy, but your Drill Dozer skills will definitely change their minds.

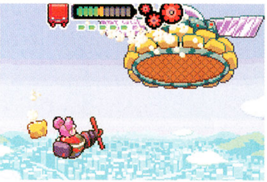
The Criminal Element

Metal City is a dangerous place—the list of trustworthy people seems to get shorter every day. You are Jill, the leader of a gang of thieves called the Red Dozers. Using the Drill Dozer device, you travel around the city, busting into art galleries, stadiums, and other urban edifices, circumventing the front door of every place you visit and opting instead to drill your way through the walls to get where you want. Don't get the wrong idea about the Red Dozers—they don't mean any harm to innocent people; they're out to steal exclusively from the Skullkers, an evil band of mischief makers headed by a nasty ringleader named Croog. That's not to say that the Red Dozers are going to cough up their collection of treasures without any resistance, however. They feel more than a little entitled to a reward for the risky efforts. In fact, the Skullkers are only one of Red Dozers' worries—Detective Carrie is hot on their trail, and often one step ahead of them. She's the hardest-working officer on the police force, and (for now) considers you public enemy number one. She's been acting a little funny recently—you don't want her to catch you, but you want to keep one eye on her in case she, too, is up to no good.

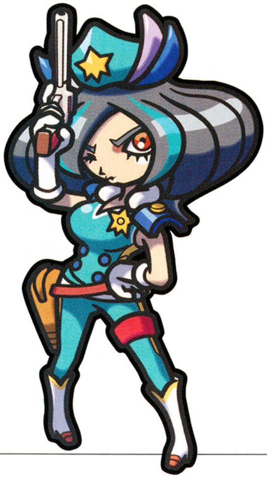
The wickedly fun story and lively cast of characters (your teammates include Grutch, a seasoned hoodlum who has his ear to the ground for all the criminal happenings in the world, and Gearmo, a mechanic who keeps your Drill Dozer in top shape) come to the Game Boy Advance courtesy of Game Freak, the company behind the Pokémon series. Game Freak's history of original titles extends further back than Pokémon, however: the company also created an early Game Boy puzzle game called Yoshi, as well as the platform action game Pulseman for Sega Genesis. And they've once again developed a brand-new world that shows off their creative talents.



Once the Drill Dozer gets a head of steam, it's a force to be reckoned with. Keep boring through block after block to break your way through virtually any obstacle.



Look for attachments such as the helicopter rotor to track down the vile Skullkers wherever they might try to hide.



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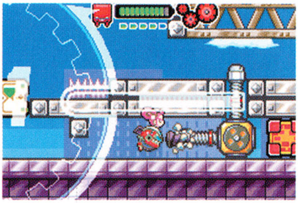
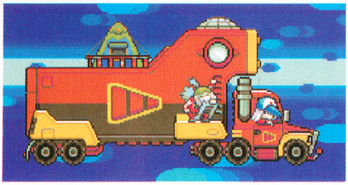
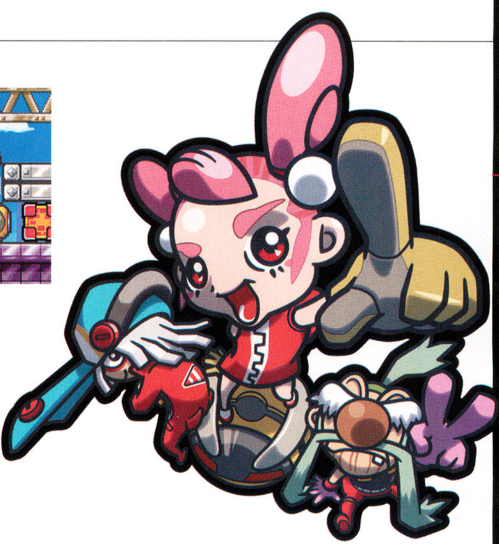
Into High Gear

There's much more to Drill Dozer than just the crazy denizens of Metal City. The innovative gameplay mechanics advance the platforming genre possibly more than any game in years. Donning the Drill Dozer, you interact with the levels in new and captivating ways.

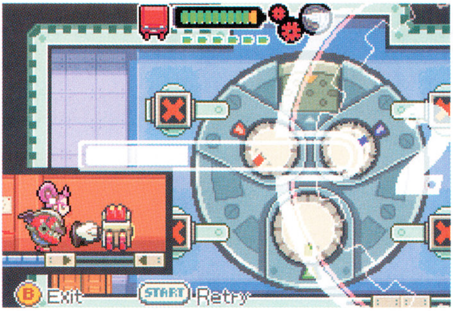






The Drill Dozer itself is a thing of beauty—from gliding smoothly underwater to launching across wide chasms to knocking enemies to their doom, this baby does it all. But if there's one thing the Drill Dozer is really good at, it's breakin' stuff. It's not the subtlest of tactics, but the criminal mind works in mysterious ways. The drill can't bore through everything, though; you gotta keep your eyes peeled for cracked walls and loose foundations where you can dig. Drill anywhere you can—you'll come across treasures and other delights in every nook and cranny.

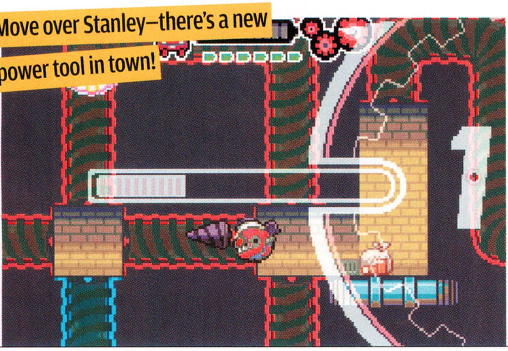
For tough jobs, the Drill Dozer can run at higher speeds, but to kick the motor up a notch you'll have to find new gears. Gear upgrades are critical to getting through the levels—you'll find reinforced doors, sturdy blocks, and other confines that require more than the standard power to break through. There's a catch—at the end of every level, Gearmo has to go in and fix the damage you've done to the Drill Dozer, meaning you start with only the smallest gear every time you begin a new level.



The safe's door might be too difficult to burrow through, but using the Drill Dozer you can pop the vault's lock with just a couple of spins.

There is a myriad of other ways to use the Drill Dozer in your pursuit of the Skullkers. As a weapon, the steely tip of the drill can knock through minions that try to stop your progress, but be warned: many of the enemies know your tactics and have steeled themselves against your attacks. Using the Drill Dozer, you'll have to find their weak spots to take them down. You can also use the machine's sharp point to plant yourself into a block, and then spin the rotor in reverse to launch yourself away and over large gaps. Many of the stages will require you to hop from block to block using a series of skillful leaps. You'll also come across mechanisms that you can interface with using the drill, such as those to open doors or to input a combination into a giant safe. And although you and the Drill Dozer are largely confined to the ground, when the situation calls for it you can equip the machine's rotor with a propeller to pass through water-filled passages or bolt on helicopter blades to hover high above the city.

The best thing about Drill Dozer is that the deeper you go, the more creative it gets. Once again, the Game Boy Advance shows that innovation comes in all sizes.



Move over Stanley—there's a new power tool in town!

Love Story

The brains behind Sega's The Rub Rabbits! talks musicals, Phoenix Wright, and where babies come from.

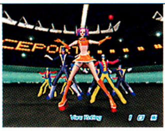
By Steve Thomason

Feel the Magic: XY/XX was one of our favorite DS launch titles. It took advantage of the handheld's unique capabilities like few other games at the time, but more importantly, it was charming, creative, and certifiably insane. Now series creator Takumi Yoshinaga and his group at Sonic Team have created a follow-up even more lovably unconventional than its predecessor. To better understand the method behind his madness, we sat down for a chat with Yoshinaga.

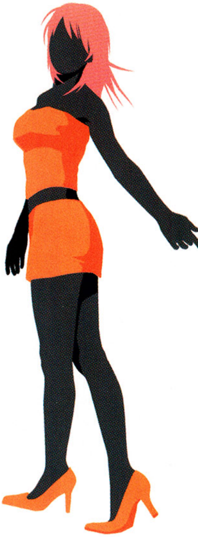
Nintendo Power: First, can you tell our readers a bit about yourself and your development background?
Takumi Yoshinaga: I've been in the industry for 12 or 13 years. I started with the Mega Drive [Sega Genesis in North America] days, working on various development teams within Sega, through the Saturn. I really took more of a lead role when it came to the Space Channel 5 series. Now, of course, I'm looking after the Feel the Magic/The Rub Rabbits! series.

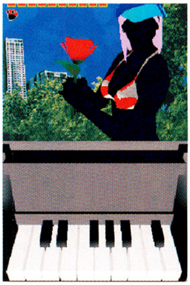
The Rub Rabbits!

NP: How did the idea for the original Feel the Magic originate?
TY: A while back, when Nintendo was presenting the DS to developers, they talked about the unique use of the touch screen. When I was looking at it and trying to come up with a game, I wanted to do something with rubbing. From there, it occurred to me that "rub" sounds very similar to "love." That's how I came up with the motif for Feel the Magic. I wanted to build it around "rub" and "love."



NP: What was the primary motivation for creating this follow-up?
TY: First, it was about not only using the touch screen and rubbing, but looking at the other functions of the DS and seeing which ones I could use to build a story or a game around the DS itself. Secondly, it's more about the idea of combining the body and spirit of a person where you actually play a game with other people using the same DS or share it with a group of people around you, sort of creating a social network. So that's what we wanted to do with multiplayer. Those were the two big motivations behind the creation of this game.





NP: The series' trademark silhouette art style is very unique. What was the inspiration behind it?
TY: I've always wanted to do a game that featured silhouette art. When I was looking at building [Feel the Magic], I saw that . . . you know, it's a love comedy story. To show people's expressions in that type of story, if you try to do it too realistically, you don't leave much room for interpretation. That's where the silhouettes came into play. When you use that style, you allow the players to imagine how the characters are thinking and how they're expressing themselves. What do they look like when they're mad, sad, etc.? We leave it to your imagination how that shows on their faces. It really felt appropriate to this type of game.

NP: The Rub Rabbits! is very funny at times. What's the team's approach to humor, and were there any specific comedy influences when you were developing the game?
TY: I really wanted to create a

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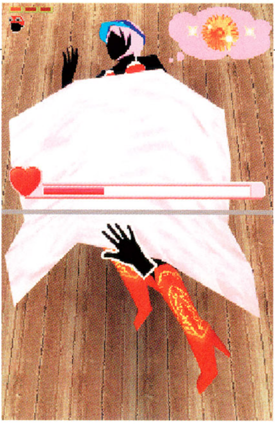


> **"My real challenge is always to look at the gaming landscape and try to deliver an experience that's different from anything else out there."**
>
> **—Takumi Yoshinaga, Sonic Team**

game that makes people laugh. I didn't want the story to be too stiff; I wanted it to have a lot of humorous components. In terms of influence, we kind of thought of it as a musical. There are a lot of musicals that have humorous components, and that's sort of the approach we took.

NP: The game is also suggestive at times, but it's never overtly sexual. How do you strike that balance, and is it something you have to be careful with?
TY: I've never had any desire to create a game with any sort of sexual content. Our intention was to build a game that never crosses that line and doesn't offend girls by being too sexual in nature. In fact, over half of our team is female. We rely a lot on them to make sure we're delivering a story that really rings true and doesn't cross that boundary.

NP: What are your thoughts on the current state of gaming? Do we need more experimental titles like The Rub Rabbits!?
TY: When you look at, for instance, what Nintendo has planned for the Revolution, it will inherently allow the player to get a different experience. From that perspective, experimental titles, as you call them, will be critical. But really what it's all about for me is that a game should make you want to reach out and try it because it gives you such a new experience. You want to see what it's going to be like. That's how I approach development. I want the player to say, "I wanna see what that experience is like."

NP: Are there any titles from other developers that you find inspiring or influential in that regard?
TY: I thought Phoenix Wright from Capcom was a really intriguing game. While it still uses familiar mechanics from the adventure genre, the experience you get from it is quite different. Especially when you look at the fact that when [the developers] built it, they weren't really looking at making a game with huge production values. It seems that they were very efficient, yet it was very intriguing.

NP: Aside from what you've done with Feel the Magic and The Rub Rabbits!, can you share with us some general ideas regarding what types of games you'd like to make in the future, whether they be in existing genres or something new entirely?
TY: I'm not really a fan of looking at existing products and trying to rebuild them. I'm very much into looking at how I can bring all-new experiences into gaming. If The Rub Rabbits! does very well, of course, we'll look at doing different things from a similar direction. But my real challenge is always to look at the gaming landscape and try to deliver an experience that's different from anything else out there.

NP: Do you find the DS hardware to be especially liberating or inspiring for trying new ideas like that?
TY: My interest in the DS is really about how you can get a different experience just from using the stylus. Secondly, it's more about the fact that you can just play with the DS, whether you're holding it upside down, sideways, whatever. It really expands the kind of experience you can have with the DS, and of course the microphone expands that as well. So, the fact that you have the stylus, which means that you don't have to be skilled with both hands, and that you can play with the hardware in so many different ways is something that I find very intriguing.

NP: Can you tell us a little bit about how the Baby Making mode in The Rub Rabbits! originated?
TY: One of the things that I really wanted to do with the DS is show that you could use it to build a bond between two people. Not just from playing, but from speaking and communicating while doing so. Because you're answering questions like "How old are you?" and "What's your sign?" it helps to create communication between two people. You can learn more about the person you're playing with. It creates conversation. And [with the part where two players cut the cake], you have to talk out loud, work together, and get your timing down. So the Baby Making mode really spawned from a desire to create a bond between people through the game.

NP: Finally, as the boot-up screen warns, The Rub Rabbits! can be a bit embarrassing to play in public. Do you have any advice for our readers on how to deal with that?
TY: [Laughs] My advice is to please play the game outside and use it to make friends. Show them that this is a great game! It may be embarrassing at first, but it really allows you to create a connection with other people.

Other men will stop at nothing to steal your beloved's heart.

Control Freak

After years of being rescued by plumbers, Peach takes the assertive role in Super Princess Peach for DS.

By Andy Myers

The tables are turned as Princess Peach embarks on an adventure to Vibe Island to rescue the helpless Mario and Luigi, both of whom have suffered emotional breakdowns. If you think the plot sounds strange, wait until you take control of the leading lady's vibes—joy, rage, gloom, and calm—which you'll employ to outsmart your enemies and get what you want. Oh, and did we mention the talking parasol?

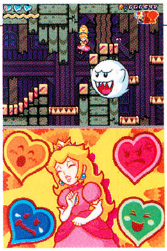
You Go, Girl!

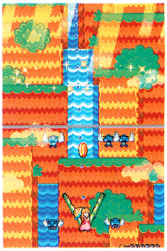
Yoshi, Luigi, even Wario—each has enjoyed a starring role in a video game. It's high time Princess Peach got hers. Super Princess Peach marks the first platformer since Super Mario Bros. 2 in which you can take control of the heroine, and this time she doesn't have to share the limelight. Peach's tale involves a stolen Vibe Scepter in the hands of Bowser. It has caused nearly everyone in the game (heroes and villains alike) to lose control of their emotions. Because the princess was conveniently absent when the scepter's power was unleashed, she can harness the power of her vibes and restore sanity to the kingdom.

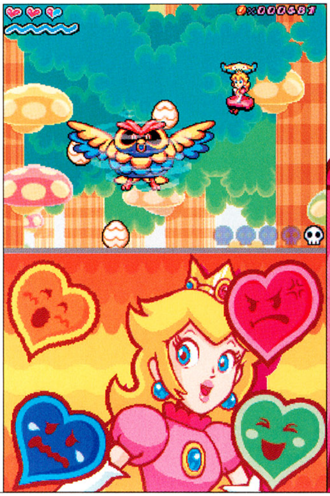
As the main character, Peach possesses a number of unique abilities, including control over her vibes. The princess's four vibes show different sides of her personality and serve a number of purposes, ranging from engulfing your enemies in flames (rage) to running recklessly fast while crying (gloom). You can access the four vibes at will via the DS touch screen, so long as your vibe meter isn't empty.

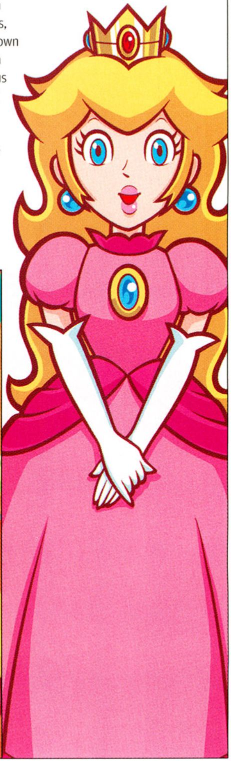
The vibes system isn't the only trick up Peach's sleeve, however. Her companion—a parasol named Perry—plays a vital role in both the story and the gameplay. In addition to serving as a powerful melee weapon against Vibe Island's distraught enemies, Perry enables Peach to scoop up foes and suck their vibe energy dry, filling up her vibe meter a bit. When you've collected enough coins (which are scattered throughout each level), you can visit Toad's shop to upgrade Perry with the Floatbrella, Poundbrella, and Chargebrella abilities. And if you've ever wondered what parasols dream about, you'll enjoy Perry's cut-scenes, which reveal portions of Perry's past through a series of bizarre dreams.

Don't expect a watered-down Mario-esque platformer in Super Princess Peach. Though the game does resemble its Mushroom Kingdom predecessors in many ways, it's also brimming with its own personality, much of which comes through in the bonus levels and minigames that put the DS touch screen and microphone to clever use. Peach may not be one of the mustachioed plumbers we all love, but her first solo effort holds its own against the Mario Bros.' best.









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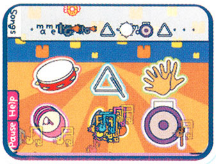

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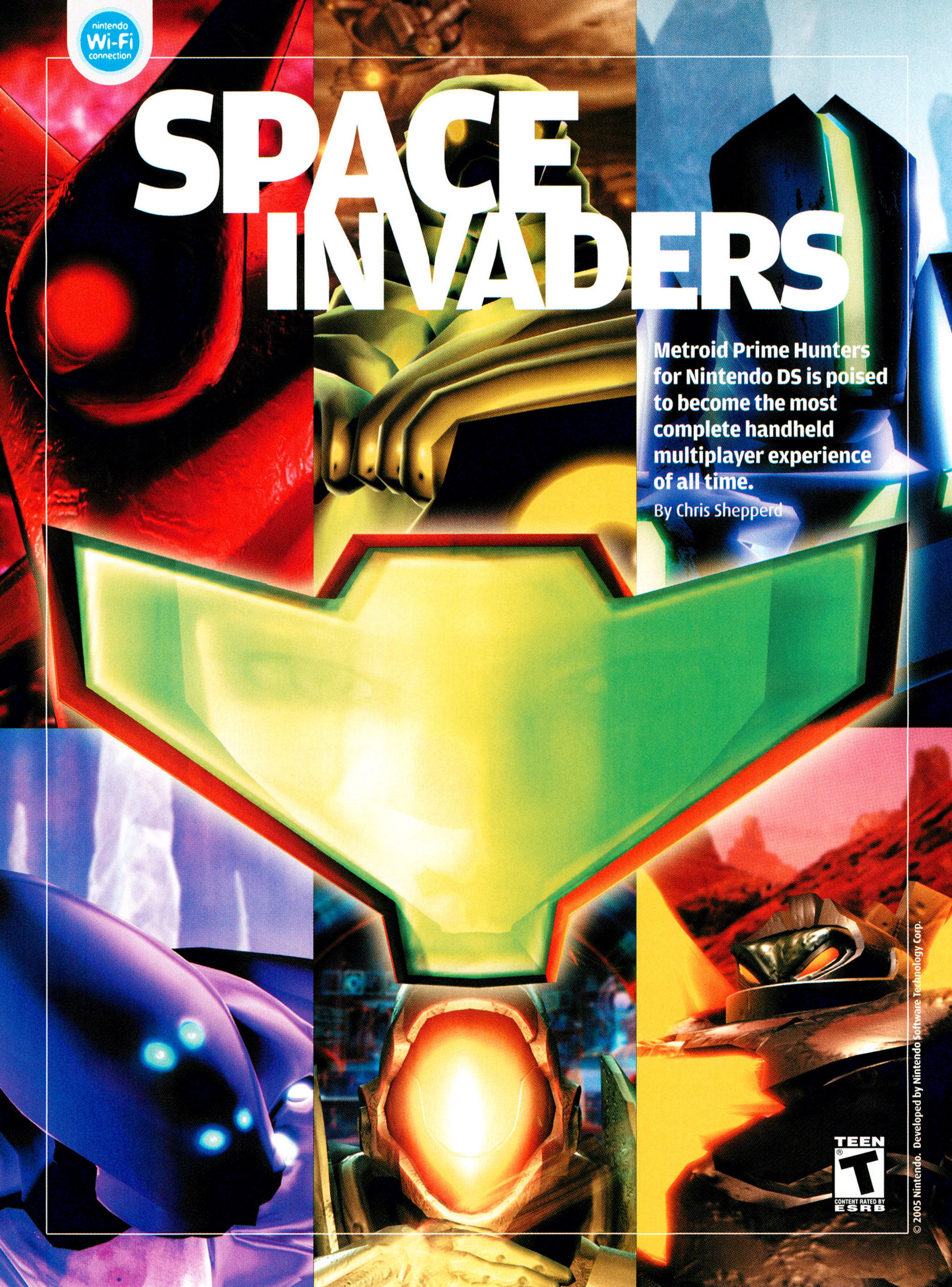

SPACE INVADERS

Metroid Prime Hunters for Nintendo DS is poised to become the most complete handheld multiplayer experience of all time.

By Chris Shepperd

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For close to 20 years, Samus Aran has been the lone bounty hunter in the universe. Now, mysterious hunters from all over the galaxy prepare to join her for an interstellar melee. In Metroid Prime Hunters, play as Samus or one of the new warriors in incredible all-out multiplayer combat.

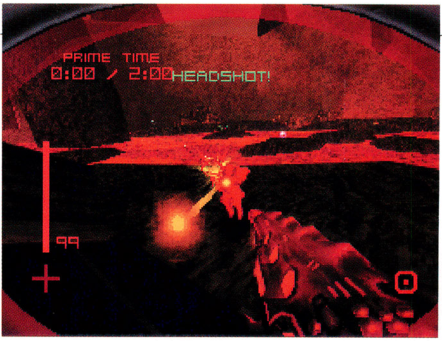
Hunter-on-Hunter Action

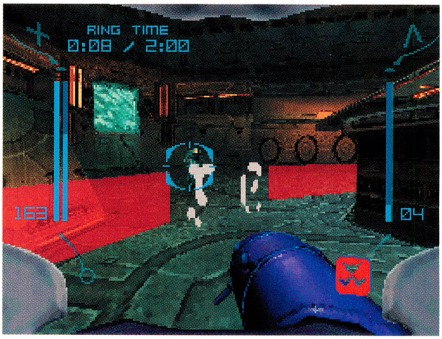
Gamers first got a taste of the high-action first-person combat at the launch of the Nintendo DS with Metroid Prime Hunters: First Hunt, an imagination-inspiring, if limited, pack-in demo. First Hunt hosted a handful of arenas, minimal character selection, and only deathmatch mode, but still managed to pique the curiosity of the DS's early adopters. When the full Metroid Prime Hunters blasts off this March, DS owners everywhere will be able to have that experience and much more.

Up to four competitors equipped with game cards will be able to engage simultaneously in frenzied conflict in any of seven highly customizable modes that span more than 20 arenas. And clever and lethal bots can be added to fill the ranks and keep the battles raging. With single-card action, players can download the game from one DS then engage in a Battle mode clash with all of the competitors playing as Samus herself. Metroid Prime Hunters will also match up gamers across the world via Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection.

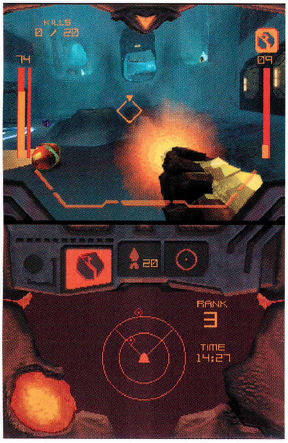
The standout element of the multiplayer experience is the collection of six new and deadly bounty hunters who join Samus for the first time. Each hunter has unique powers, including alternate forms comparable to Samus's Morph Ball ability. And every bounty hunter brings a new weapon to the battlefield, such as a gun that fires beams of pure energy, and small-scale nuclear devices. During multiplayer melees, players will have a default Power Beam and missiles akin to Samus's, then must find the special weapons before they can use them against their foes.

Deadly weapons, awesome warriors, and amazing worlds—Metroid Prime Hunters is set to reinvent handheld multiplayer gaming.





Don't get caught staring at the striking 3-D environments—your enemies surely won't. Keep an eye on your health with the meter on the left side of the screen, and monitor your remaining special-weapon ammo with the meter on the right.



While the action takes place on the top screen, you control your hunter's aim, select your weapon, scan for nearby enemies, and keep tabs on your current rank on the bottom screen.

LIVE THE ADVENTURE

In the single-player adventure, Samus has been encouraged by the Galactic Federation to explore a region called the Alimbic Cluster, a once-inhabited region beyond the edges of civilization. The famous hunter must investigate strange signals emanating from the abandoned lands that speak of an ultimate power—a power that, in the wrong hands, could mean certain doom for the Galactic Federation's citizens. Samus won't be alone in the search for the Alimbic Cluster's secrets—the call has reached bounty hunters all over the universe, and she must race against them as they descend on the deserted world.

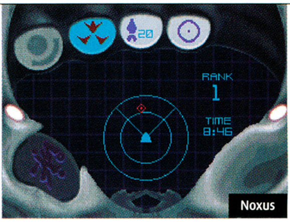
Check out next month's Metroid Prime Hunters coverage—we'll delve further into Samus's upcoming epic adventure.

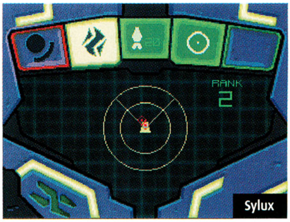
Universal Soldiers

The new bounty hunters are truly the defining feature of Metroid Prime Hunters. The bounty hunters share the same unparalleled skill and passion for battle, but like their often-nefarious histories, each hunter's approach to combat is unique.

Every bounty hunter has a native weapon—for example, the draconian Noxus hails from a planet constantly buried under layers of ice. As a result, Noxus's weapon is a supercooled energy beam. The weapons come in all forms—some fire long-distance lasers, and others lob high-temperature projectiles. In multiplayer combat, the bounty hunters can find and use any of the special weapons, but the hunters are especially deadly with their native munitions in hand.

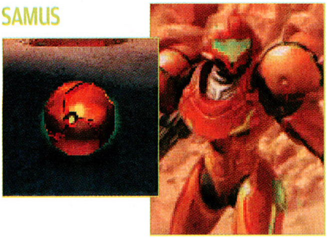
The bounty hunters also have alternate forms that effectively double their lethality. Like Samus, the hunters can roll into compact forms to fit into tight spaces. The attacks vary from hunter to hunter, however.





Every hunter has a dedicated heads-up display to match the look of the hunter. However, the functionality for each is identical.

SAMUS



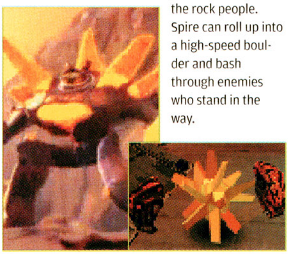
The legendary Samus Aran was raised by Chozo on the planet Zebes after Space Pirates destroyed her home. Raised to be a strong warrior, she continued her military training with the Galactic Federation, and still works for the organization on a freelance basis. With her Morph Ball ability, Samus can drop bombs to elude pursuing enemies.

NOXUS

The Vhozon race's fanatical view of morality exceeds that of virtually all other civilized societies, and to enforce their sense of justice they have sent Noxus. To help survive the Vhozon's frozen home planet, Noxus can change into a rapidly spinning top to stay warm, as well as bowl over foes.

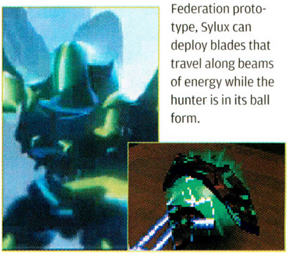
SPIRE

Spire is the last of a race of people made from solid rock. The bounty hunter chose the profession so it could search for information regarding the fate of the rock people. Spire can roll up into a high-speed boulder and bash through enemies who stand in the way.



SYLUX

Sylux's background is unknown, but the hunter's motives are clear-- to crush the Galactic Federation. Using technology suspiciously similar to a stolen Federation prototype, Sylux can deploy blades that travel along beams of energy while the hunter is in its ball form.

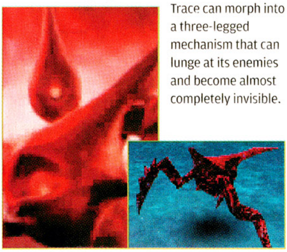


KANDEN

The subject of a lab experiment gone wrong, Kanden gained incredible strength and keen instinct. But the experiment destroyed Kanden's conscience, leaving only a cold-blooded killer. Kanden can transform into an insect whose tail can home in on an enemy and explode on contact.

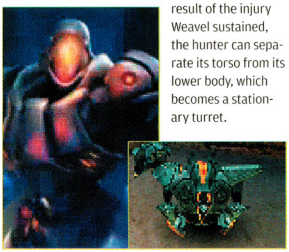
TRACE

The Kriken youth Trace is carrying out a rite of passage to search for worlds the greedy and evil race can invade. Using sophisticated Kriken technology, Trace can morph into a three-legged mechanism that can lunge at its enemies and become almost completely invisible.



WEAVEL

A former Space Pirate severely wounded by Samus in a scuffle on Brinstar, Weavel will remain associated with the Pirates as long as it's convenient. As a result of the injury Weavel sustained, the hunter can separate its torso from its lower body, which becomes a stationary turret.



Planetary Intergalactic

Each arena has its own characteristics, including low gravity and boost pads to launch long distances. Watch where you step—patches of ice will make it difficult to slow down and turn, while hot lava will sap your life in an instant. Some of the stages take place in space stations high above terra firma—one false step will spell your doom. Stay alert for health replenishments, weapon and ammo pick-ups, and temporary enhancements such as cloaking and double-damage modifiers, the most valuable of which are often found in the most remote corners of the stages.

How you battle is as important as where you battle. Seven multiplayer modes, all with different rules, await you. In some of the modes, you can divide the opponents into teams. Your skill with a particular bounty hunter may suit one gameplay mode more than another, but you'd better be prepared for anything your enemies throw at you.

BATTLE

Take on hunters in a free-for-all battle royale. Set goals based on the total number of kills, a time limit, or both. The rules of Battle mode are uncomplicated, but both your offensive prowess and your defensive tactics will be tested.

BOUNTY

All of the bounty hunters vie for the same prize—a precious object called an Octolith. Be the one to find it and return it to home base to earn a point. Collect as many as possible within the time limit.

PRIME HUNTER

Be the first to defeat an opponent to become the Prime Hunter. Then stay alive as long as possible. The enemy who kills you will become the next Prime Hunter. The bounty hunter who stays the Prime Hunter the longest wins.

NODES

Small beacons are placed around the stage—when you take control of one, you claim it until another hunter can claim it back. Protect as many beacons as you can for as long as you can to claim victory.

SURVIVAL

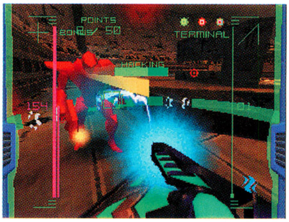
Starting with a limited number of lives, you must eliminate the other bounty hunters before they eliminate you. You'll have to be both aggressive and stealthy to defeat your foes without revealing yourself.

DEFENDER

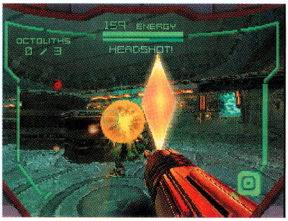
Seek out the special circle and protect it with your life; as long as you are the only one within the circle, you will earn points. The hunter who manages to protect the circle the longest wins.

CAPTURE

Split into teams and raid your enemies' base, then return with their Octolith. In order to earn a point, your Octolith must also be at your home base. Collect as many enemy Octoliths as you can while protecting your own.



You gotta know the territory to succeed in Nodes mode. Memorize all the shortcuts between the nodes, and be sure to watch your back—enemies less familiar with the terrain will follow you to the nodes, then take you out when you arrive.



In Capture mode, it's essential that you mix up your route from the Octolith to the home base; otherwise you'll run the risk of getting ambushed. At the same time, pay attention to the paths your opponents take.

A World of Options

Along with the countless combinations of stages, modes, and hunters, a group of standard options can expand the way you play. Before you begin a match, you can set radar visibility and weapon selection, as well as friendly fire for team battles. And if you are unable to find four opponents for your next LAN match, you can include bots in any mode. Watch out—the bots know how to handle a firearm, and they're privy to all the good places to set an ambush. You can set each bot's difficulty individually to keep a level playing field.

KILLS
0 / 15
65

GLOBAL CONFLICT

With Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection, you'll never be without enemies. Experience virtually all of the multiplayer modes of Wi-Fi versus competitors around the globe. Search for a random game of your liking, or exchange Friend Codes with other Hunters players to compete with people you know. When you're done playing, head to www.nintendowifi.com to track your stats.

INSIDE ZELDA

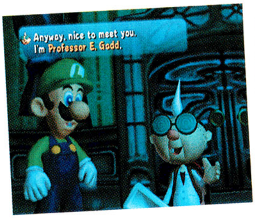
NINTENDO POWER'S MONTHLY CHECK-IN FROM THE ZELDA DEVELOPMENT TEAM.

(Part 10)

THE MONSTERS IN HIS HEAD

YOSHIYUKI OYAMA | **NINTENDO** | **KYOTO**

It's got to be nice to bring Link to life, thinking up all of those heroic deeds, imagining valiant actions. But what does it take to summon monsters that stick in your dreams and won't go away? Nintendo designer Yoshiyuki Oyama had that weighty responsibility for Twilight Princess. Although the majority of the game's creatures still lurk in the shadows, Oyama shares his thoughts about monster design this issue, and you never know what you'll see if you look closely enough. Monsters are all around you, according to the designer, who's such a mad genius that it's no surprise that Nintendo used his name for Professor Oyamah (the Japanese version of E. Gadd in the Mario series). He also shares his perspective on what Zelda means to its fans, how Zelda games are inherently different from all other fantasy titles, and why making Zelda games *must* be unlike anything the development world usually dares to do.



Oyama did some creature design for Luigi's Mansion and also created the look for Professor E. Gadd.

THINKING ORGANICALLY

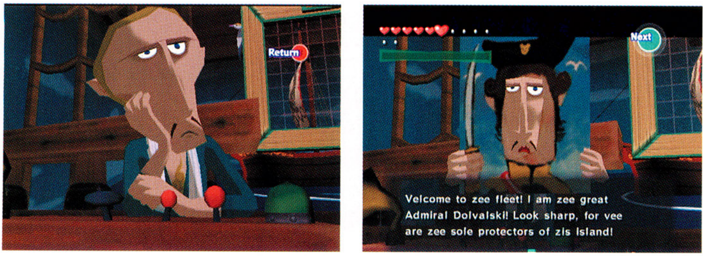
I've always loved drawing and playing video games, so it seems like a no-brainer that I'd want to work in the gaming industry, but there's a lot more to it than that. I knew that I wanted to have some kind of creative job, whether working as an independent artist or for a company, but I headed into gaming so that my work could be seen by people all over the world. Correction: not just seen, but also "touched" through gaming controllers! The more that someone can be drawn into an artistic creation—through direct experience and touching—the better they can judge for *themselves* whether it turned out good or bad. In the art world and in other creative trades, specialists are the ones who usually tell us whether something has high quality. But I want to help people get *directly* connected to the creative world, and that's possible in video games. I'm very particular about the sensation and feeling of touch in my own creations, and that's one of the major reasons that I love that Nintendo is pursuing a far deeper connection with players on the DS and the upcoming Revolution.

But how did I end up conjuring the monsters for Twilight Princess? My first position with Nintendo was working on Majora's Mask, where I designed Mikau, the Zora band's guitarist, and the supermuscular Mountain Smithy that hones Link's sword. After I did some 3-D modeling for the minigame mode in Pokémon Stadium, I had a great opportunity to do creature design for Luigi's Mansion, the first time I designed enemies and monsters. Since the enemies and the battle system were so unique in Luigi's Mansion, I created the ghosts with a much stronger sense of individual personality than seen in most games. In addition, I created a new character for the Mario world, the highly eccentric inventor who's known as Professor Elvin Gadd in North America. Personally, I was hoping that he would show up in Mario Kart DS, but at least he had a big part in Mario & Luigi: Partners in Time!

Soon after my time with Luigi's Mansion, I joined the Wind Waker team. Zelda fans have a wealth of interesting opinions about The Wind Waker. From a creator's standpoint, it was an unbelievably exciting project that brimmed with character design. Of my contributions to The Wind Waker, I'd have to say that the minigame-peddler Salvatore was my favorite. Originally, the game plan had the concept of a submarine minigame. The minigame itself wasn't going to be too difficult, so we wanted to add more liveliness to the event somehow. I got some input that we should see if we could bring more story to the minigame through the use of character dialog and picture cards. So I let my imagination run with those notions, plus some ventriloquism ideas. I thought that maybe the minigame guy should be sort of a swindler, somewhat middle-aged and skinny. The development staff

Oyama's first project with Nintendo was Majora's Mask, where he put the rock star into Mikau.

So many individual mysteries are scattered throughout Ocarina and other Zelda titles. Which reflects how we develop for the series.



Velcome to zee fleet! I am zee great Admiral Dolvalski! Look sharp, for vee are zee sole protectors of zis island!

One of The Wind Waker's strangest characters, Salvatore, was designed by Oyama, who brought the minigame peddler's bizarre communication to life.

really liked my proposal, and after other people added in his unique voice and accessories, the mysterious Salvatore was born!

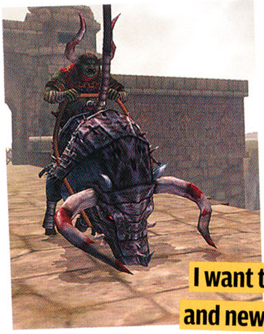
To me, the Zelda series itself reflects what Zelda development is like. Unlike other adventures, Zelda games don't follow fantasy's traditionally linear, majestic story path that ultimately leads to a royal climax. Zelda is not such a simple fantasy. Many people lump Ocarina of Time in with traditional fantasies, but I just don't see it that way. So many individual mysteries are scattered throughout Ocarina and other Zelda titles. Which reflects how we develop for the series. At the beginning of a project, we don't have One Big Idea totally set in stone. Everyone thinks about a variety of ideas, and the project moves forward more organically as people absorb all of the fresh thinking. We find that we get inspirations from sharing this and that, and whether we think something new might be a "Zelda idea" or not. Of course, we don't have unlimited development time, so as much as we enjoy open-minded thinking, we eventually need to balance that with reaching closure. But I strongly believe this process is integral to what creates the unique feeling of a Zelda game.

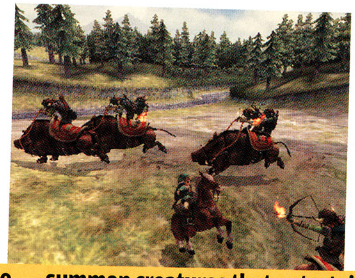
IN CHARGE OF TWILIGHT'S EVILS

I wasn't in charge of monster design at the start of Twilight Princess development. I was working with player-controlled characters, such as Link. But when we suddenly needed more people for monster design, I was put on the monster team. I've designed many of the enemies that you've already seen, such as the horseback riders and their lance-wielding boss. What's interesting about development of monsters for Twilight Princess is that I want to be careful to summon creatures that entertain both Zelda fans and new players who've never played Zelda games before. They should appeal on some level to those who are fond of the series; however, I'd like them to have entirely fresh surprises, too! Yet I'd also like them to have thrills that echo the past, so they have feelings like "I *know* this! I can do it!" and "Holy cow! *This* is how you brought it back for Twilight Princess? Awesome!"

I also focus on creating enemies that perfectly fit the environments. And here's where the idea of what Twilight Princess's style *really* is comes in. Some have misunderstood it as "photorealistic Zelda," but it's actually "realistic Zelda." And by realism, we mean that it is really important that players get a very realistic sense that they're deep in the game, which involves more effects than mere *photo*realism. This is more complicated than you might think when it comes to monster design. I try to be very careful to create monsters that enhance the sense and pacing of adventure in each phase of the game. For example, let's say you've just beaten a small enemy. Later on, you should possibly meet with the same kind of foe but larger. If you continue to beat those, you should eventually meet up with a massive version of the creatures. This kind of progression helps create a story-like feeling, even when simply battling through levels.

Here's another example that draws on the horseback





I want to . . . summon creatures that entertain both Zelda fans and new players who've never played Zelda games before.

Inspirations for monster designs can come from really diverse places, and I enjoy taking cues from nature and living creatures!

Between interests for his new French bulldog and fishing, Oyama has plenty of natural source material for making his monsters.

riders that you've seen. I'd like to show what kind of language or communication they use, and what life back at their base is like. But if these details get pushed too often on players, they might wind up bored. So it's key to be brief about such things so it stays interesting and fun, and becomes part of gameplay.

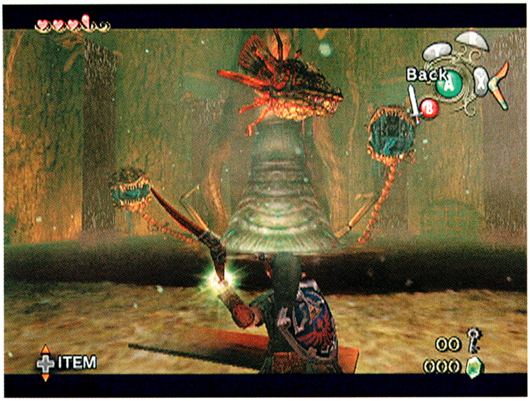
Something we consider in Zelda boss design is that the item that you find in a particular stage is often the key for defeating its boss. To a certain degree, Twilight Princess is following that classic idea. After all, we'd like to create situations in which players try to use items, especially if the item was hard to find. Ultimately, fantasy adventures usually don't require much more than a sword, shield, bow, and occasionally bombs. But Zelda offers much more item diversity, and that's what's made the series uniquely alluring for players. So we really try to incorporate item-minded ideas into the final boss designs.

Finally, no discussion of Twilight Princess's enemies can end without mentioning Ganon. I know that everyone's wondering what going on with Link's old nemesis. All I can say now is, we're preparing more than you could possibly ever, ever, ever expect . . . and to stay tuned for more details.

WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE

Inspirations for monster designs can come from really diverse places, and I enjoy taking cues from nature and living creatures! I like reading books about the habits of animals and chewing on all that in discussions. Though I might also take some inspiration from movies, perhaps even the people that I work with, it often comes back to nature. It's all endlessly amazing.

When I'm not at work, I usually don't stick close to home, but instead head out for the great outdoors. In addition to snowboarding, I also like to go fishing. Kazuaki Morita, the programmer who talked Twilight Princess with you last issue, is a good friend, and we often go fishing together. When I am at home, I enjoy spending time with my French bulldog. Given my interests in learning about nature and living creatures, it's no surprise that I've now become a major dog-lover.



Zelda games are characterized by their unique items, such as Twilight Princess's Gale Boomerang. Oyama says that such items are a major part of developing engaging foes.

Like I mentioned earlier, Zelda development is all about absorbing *many* people's inspirations, opinions, ideas, and even personalities as we go forward. Since Twilight Princess's development team is so enormous, there's an ever greater challenge of reaching creative consensus! But even though that's the case now, the importance of teamwork has never been more vital. Each individual's contributions are very important; but each person always needs to think about what the whole team is doing.

As we continue to be very hard at work on Twilight Princess, my mind goes back to my visit to E3 in 2004. Just seeing how hyped fans were when they first saw what we were up to really inspires me every day. Since this game's development definitely exceeds that of Ocarina of Time and The Wind Waker, thinking about how invested the series' fans are keeps me focused on how important Twilight Princess is. And how will my monsters ensure that Twilight Princess is the greatest Zelda game ever? Wait and see. You won't be disappointed.

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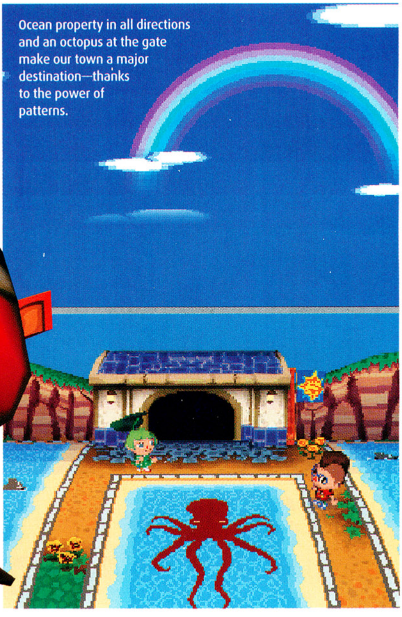
ANIMAL CROSSING WATER WORLD??

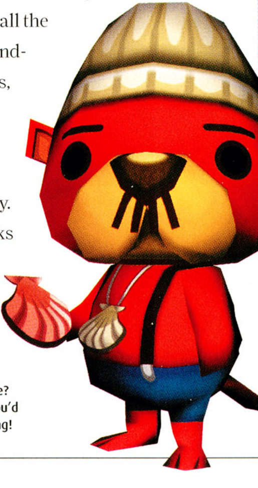
Tropical walks, beaches, and a tiki room to die for! How do you turn Animal Crossing: Wild World into a lush island resort? Simply adopt our style strategies.

By Steven Grimm

Animal Crossing style goes much farther on the DS than it did on the GCN. Due to the simplicity of stylus design and the ability to place patterns on the landscape, ACWW is transforming into a fantabulous place. Towns we've visited via DS-to-DS travel and Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection reveal surprises around every corner. And when you add up all the possibilities, from full-scale landscaping to personal makeovers, you can radically reinvent your town. Knowing how to make awesome effects with patterns and furnishings is key. We show you the tips and tricks behind AC's superstyle.



Ocean property in all directions and an octopus at the gate make our town a major destination—thanks to the power of patterns.



Resetti Says:

What's all that racket up there? Messing up the landscape? You'd better know what you're doing!

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The Rub Rabbits!™

NINTENDO POWER

SEGA

NINTENDO DS™

TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

Mild Violence
Suggestive Themes

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E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Comic Mischief
Mild Cartoon Violence

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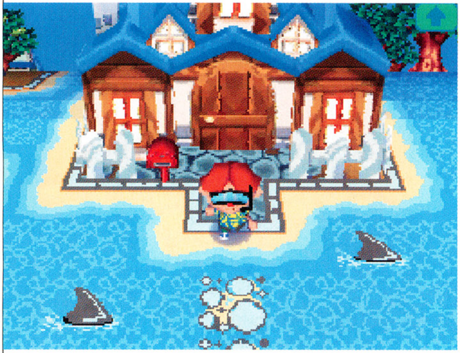
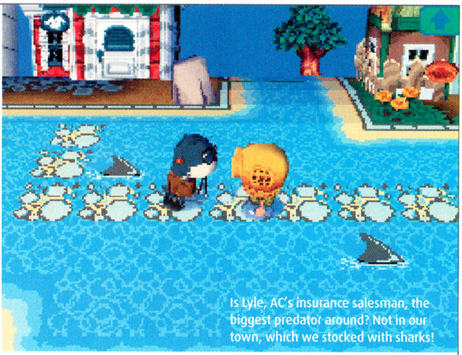
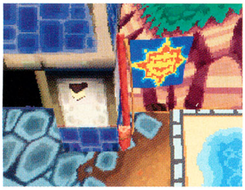
It's Totally Beachin'

The excitement never stops in our resort, where every building's on an island and walkways keep you from being shark bait. Of course, you can walk on the patterns—but you don't need to tell tourists that.

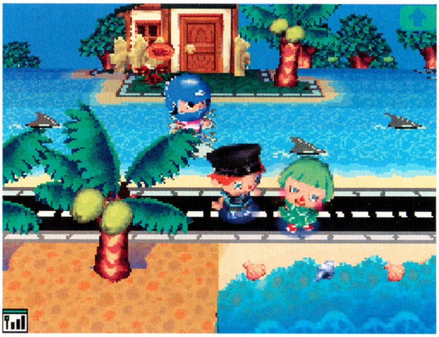




Is Lyle, AC's insurance salesman, the biggest predator around? Not in our town, which we stocked with sharks!



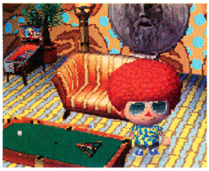
It takes only one pattern to make a statement on the town flag. We designed a sun that would welcome guests with its tropical flair.



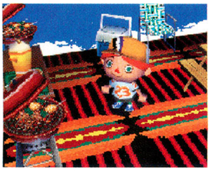
Extreme Real Estate

Theme rooms are a big draw at resorts, so we went whole hog with original patterns and furniture-set fusions to make magic moments. Our Deep Dive Atrium welcomes guests. The Tiki Room draws lounge lizards. Our BBQ Room's great for tailgating. And the Upstairs Aviary is a quiet retreat, but beware the Temple of Doom!

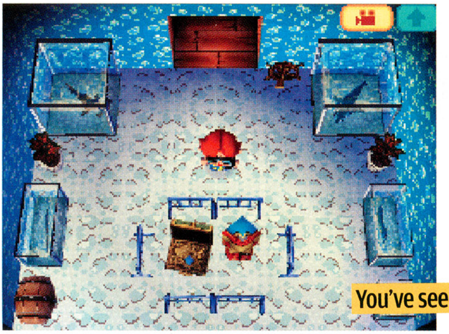
Tiki Room



BBQ Room

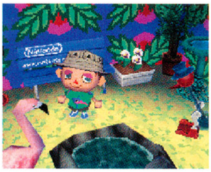


Deep Dive Atrium

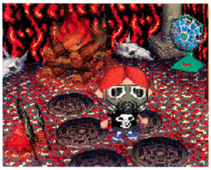


Our Deep Dive Atrium is 40,000 leagues under the sea! Or at least it looks like it is, with bubbling-water wallpaper and sharks in tanks leering at visitors.

Upstairs Aviary



Temple of Doom



You've seen our Water World. Now learn how to make it yours!

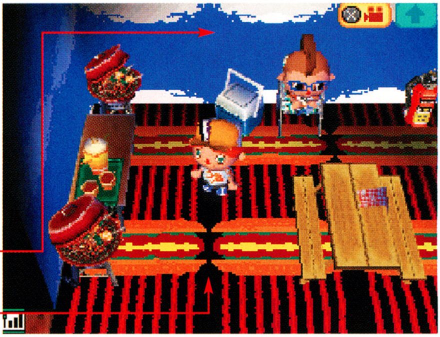
Great Patterns at a Glance

Just screwing around with the design program in Animal Crossing: Wild World is a lot of fun. If you want to create specific effects, however, you need to know which colors to pick, how to make stunning patterns with the design tools, and how patterns stick (and stretch) to various objects. With our tips, you'll blow visitors away with your patterns.

1

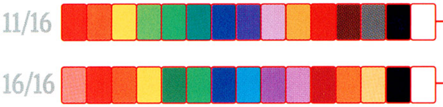
A Color Palette for Every Occasion

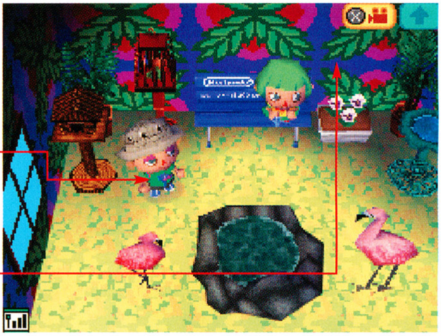
The 16 color palettes in ACWW offer a dizzying kaleidoscope of choices. But specific palettes are better for certain effects. So think about what you're going to design, then grab the right palette and go to it!



The Whole World in One Palette?

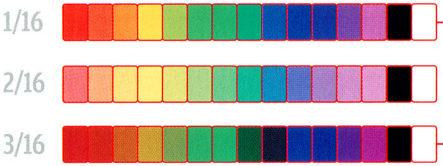
Most palettes are good for focused effects. But palettes 11 and 16, with a range of colors far wider than a rainbow's, are good for just about any image. It'll be crude, like our sky wallpaper and hot dog floor, but it'll do the trick.

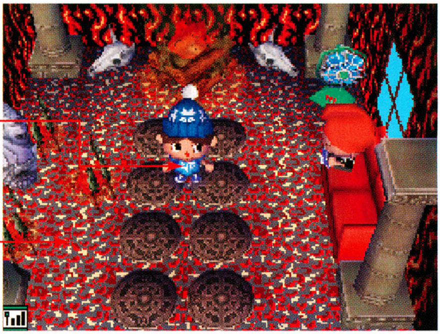




Smaller But Smoother World

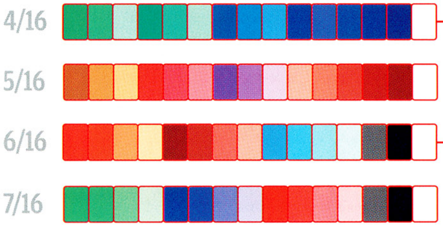
Palette 1 offers a spectrum of colors much like a rainbow. See how the designs aren't harsh like the BBQ Room's? Using neighboring hues smooths a design. Use palette 2 for sunnier effects and palette 3 to darken the mood subtly.





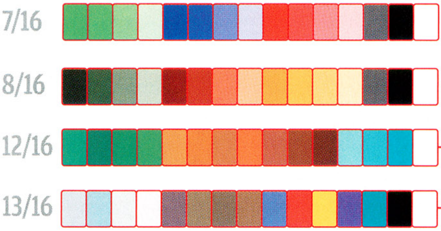
From Freezing to Fiery Effects

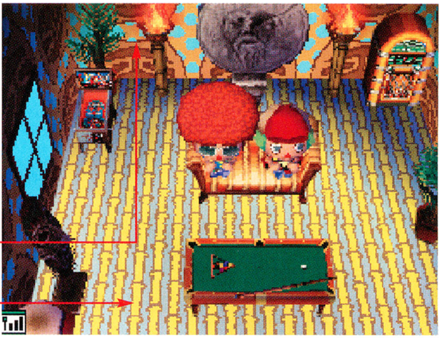
Palette 4 is the best for cool tones, which can literally mean icebergs and water, but also any chill mood. Palette 5 is the opposite—flames and lava, or any fiery attitude. Palettes 6 and 7 blend the two sensibilities.



Nature's Bounty of Colors

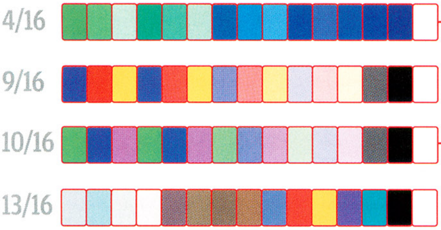
Four palettes are great for natural effects and materials. Palettes 7, 8, and 12 have the greens for forests and fields, and with touches of lava, sand, and soil tones, respectively. Palette 13 is good for rocky, barren areas.

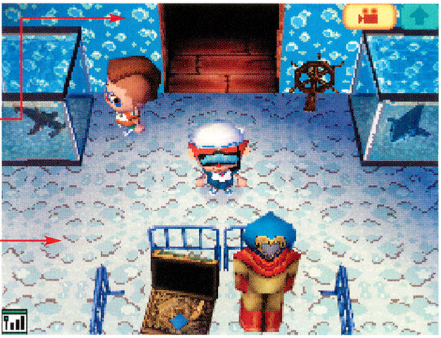




Life under the Sea

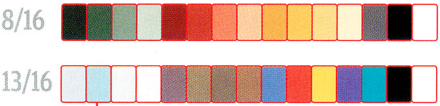
Throughout our Water World, we created many H20 effects using the cool palette 4 and barren palette 13. But we've also used quirky palettes 9 and 10 for unusual accents, like pastels in the Deep Dive Atrium's aquarium bed.

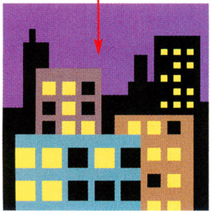


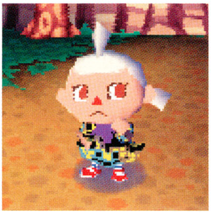


Cityscapes and Concrete Designs

Two of the previously noted palettes are also handy for creating the steely, artificial looks of urban places. Not a lot of loud, primary colors here—just muted tones excellent for too-cool-for-school designs.

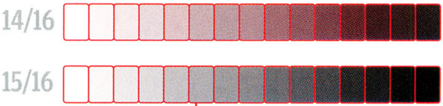


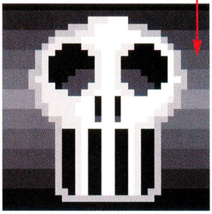


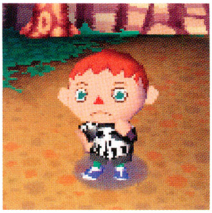


What's All That Gray Good For?

ACWW lavishes two palettes on graytone scales: palette 14 goes from white to brown to black; palette 15 skips the brown in favor of more shades of gray. When you really want to make the mood serious, explore their inky darkness.







Resetti Says:

Is that clear enough for ya? Now take those 16 palettes and impress the heck outta me—on the double!

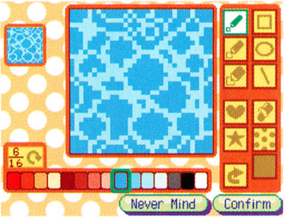
2

Can't Do Freehand? Abuse the Tools!

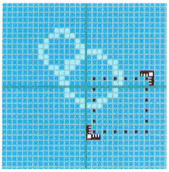
Gracie thinks she's all that. Show her how it's really done!

You don't need a knack for freehand to get cool designs from ACWW's paint program. You'll be stunned at how much you can do with one visualization trick: break down your design into circles and squares. If you can do that, then you can use two tools to make those shapes, then another technique to erase lines you don't want. After that, a touch-up and autofill are all you need!

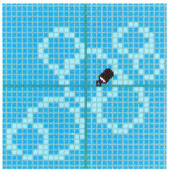
Designing with Circles



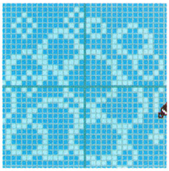
We made gallons of H2O patterns to spread across our landscape and on our Deep Dive Atrium walls. Thinking in terms of circles was a major help.



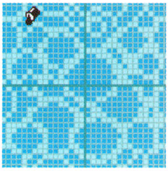
Using the circle tool, we plopped down a few rings. Simple enough.



After selecting the background color, we "erased" some parts of circles we didn't want. Then we drew a few more circles and did the same to those.

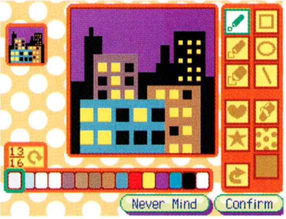


We could have stopped there. But we planned to tile the pattern (see page 56), so we did a smidge of freehand to create a half-bubble on each side.

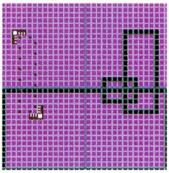


Finally, to give a little more depth to the water, we used the auto-fill tool to drop a few splashes of a third blue hue into the design.

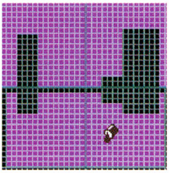
Creating with Squares



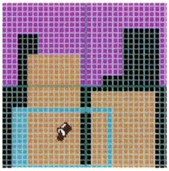
Our cityscape is a clear example of block-based design. With a little patience and a quick hand with the square tool, we built this city in no time.



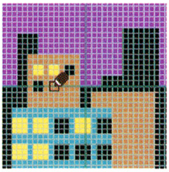
We started on the background and horizon by dropping in three rectangles with the square tool.



To silhouette the skyline, we used the fill tool to darken our skyscrapers.

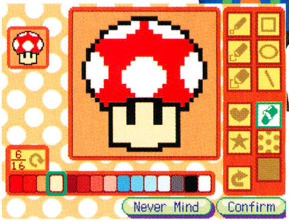


After selecting a lighter color, we made two closer buildings, then selected an even lighter color for the closest tower, using the fill tool as necessary.

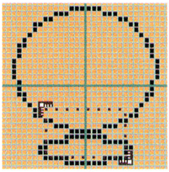


To provide the final touch, lit-up and dark windows, we used quick freehand jabs with the pen tool, though you could easily use the square tool instead.

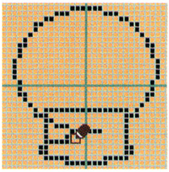
Combing & Conjuring



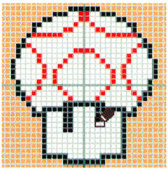
The elusive 1-Up Mushroom! Well, it isn't hard to find one if you break the popular icon down into circles and squares.



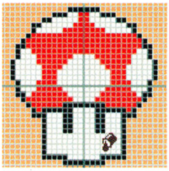
Two ovals got us started: a bulbous one for the head, a squat one for the face. Then we connected them with a rectangle.



After selecting the background color, we used the pen tool to erase the unwanted lines.



We used the fill tool to whiten the 1-Up, then we switched to red and dropped some circles on the 1-Up head, plus did a couple of touches to erase lines and add eyes.



After a few more splashes of red and white fill, we had our 1-Up ready to go!

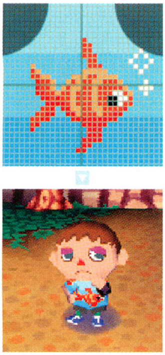
3 Wrapping Your Mind Around Clothing Design

Most AC players make a pattern, then decide what to slap it on. And that's backward. First, think about where the pattern is going. Second, understand how that patterns "behaves" on that object. And then design with all that in mind. Patterns take on five very different forms in clothing design alone.

Know Where the Dead Space Is

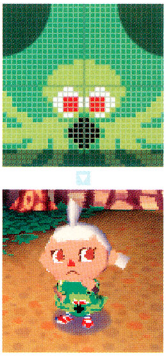
Each kind of clothing takes only part of a pattern. Design in the active space (not the dead area, darkened below) to make the biggest impact.

Boy's Clothing



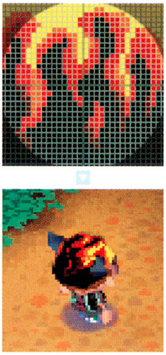
The part of the pattern that makes the biggest splash on a boy's shirt is in the center, which takes up the lion's share of the front and the back of the shirt. The upper corners aren't used. Also, the center of the pattern is shrunken for each sleeve's design.

Girl's Clothing



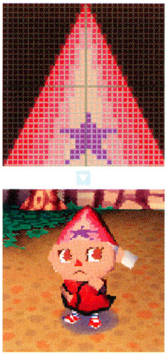
Patterns wrap onto a dress a lot like they do on a boy's shirt, but more of the upper pattern shows up under the neckline on a dress. And the skirt flares out at the bottom, stretching the pattern's lower center. The bottom of the pattern, however, goes largely unused.

Boy's Hat



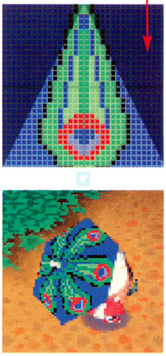
Guys wear a horned cap with a domed top. The highest part of the pattern starts above the eyes; the bottom tapers off at the neck. Keep that in mind (plus that fact the the design is stretched spherically!) when creating a well-crafted hat.

Girl's Hat



A girl's hat is completely different, using a cone-shaped part of the pattern on the front and back of a cone-shaped hat. Don't bother designing in the 50% of the pattern that's dead space—it'll be left on the cutting-room floor when the cap goes live.

Parasol

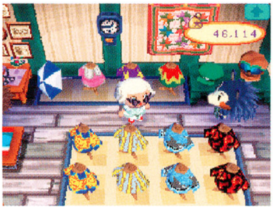


The parasol uses a part of a pattern that's similar to the active space on the girl's hat, but it's repeated around the parasol's entire surface. When planning a stunning parasol, envision how your design will look when spread out in a 360-degree fan arrangement.

4 Spreading Your Rep Around the World

Why hoard all the patterns in your inventory? You and other players can use the mannequins at Mabel's shop to showcase and save more designs. It's a great way to spread your influence.

Eight Extra Save Spots



If you need to save more patterns than will fit in your inventory, head to Mabel's shop, where you can trade patterns from your stash for those on the rack. You can also discard a displayed design entirely. That means your town has eight more save spots at everyone's disposal.

Passing Out Your Patterns

Your patterns will be brilliant, and other players will want them. There's only one way to give your creation to another player, however: by placing it on a mannequin. Your pal can take it right off the dummy.

The Path to Fashion Fame

Animals love to adopt the latest fashions, and they'll be proud to wear yours on their backs. The best way to get them to wear your designs is to deck out all eight mannequins with your creations. Want someone to wear a specific shirt? Fill all eight mannequins with the same pattern!

If you showcase your work at Mabel's shop, animals will not only wear them; they'll also take them along when they move to other towns. It's flattering to see old animal buds living in other towns—and still sporting patterns they discovered while they were your neighbors.

Resetti Says:

Quick tip about the paint program: Instead of dinking with the palette to grab a color you've used, choose the eyedropper to leech a hue directly from your design. Hold B to get that sucker!

Landscape Makeovers

Once you've mastered how patterns can be applied to clothing, it's time to dress up your whole landscape. Though you can create fun spot treatments and even sprawling effects with a single pattern, you can also assemble highly elaborate landscapes from many patterns. The landscape is your canvas. So think big—and then think even bigger.

Make waves in your town with a team effort.

1 Four Characters Equals Massive Style

Each of the four players that can live in your town can save eight patterns. So whether you control all four townies or want to invite others to play, plan on exploiting all 32 patterns.

32 PATTERNS!

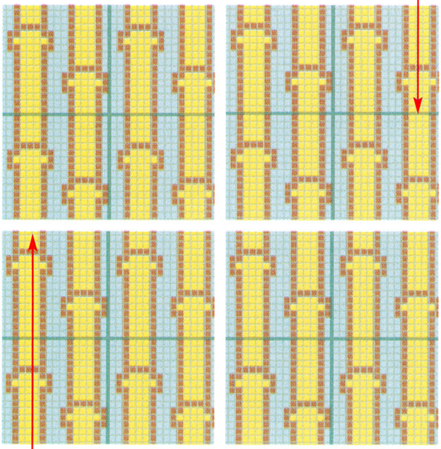
There is a hitch to using all 32 saved patterns. You'll need to stop one character's game and start another one's game to access his patterns.

2 Quick & Dirty: Covering the Landscape

When covering a part of your town with an effect, whether it's waves, clouds, or a yellow-brick road, you'll want it to look smooth and pleasing. If you want to "spend" only one pattern on a vast effect (the 32 save spots do get used up fast when you're all about superstyle!), we've got two tips for you.

Think "Tile" to Stay in Style

When designing a pattern to stamp down repeatedly, visualize how it will tile together. You'll want the mass effect to have a smooth, evenly spaced look, so turn on the design tool's grid and get pixel-perfect.

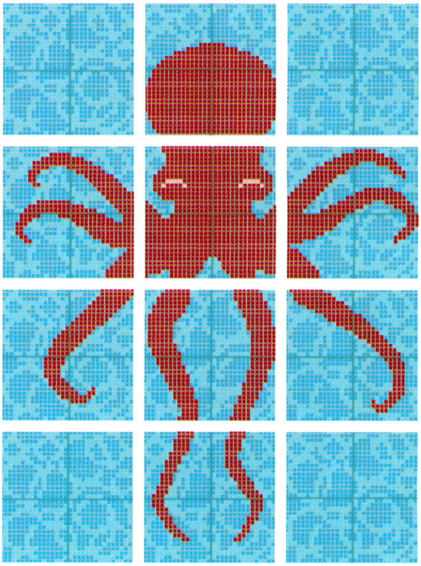


What's Your Exit Strategy?

If a line exits a side of the pattern, reenter in another part of the design. Notice how the bamboo poles in our tiki deck pattern run off a side but flow seamlessly into the next square when repeated.

3 Slow & Steady: The Large-Scale Statement

The less quick 'n' dirty you are with mass effects, the bigger the wow factor will be. We covered our landscape in water, so we used several H2O tiles to make a multi-tiled effect that was less repetitive. And for our biggest wow-factor piece, the octopus, we used a total of 9 tiles.



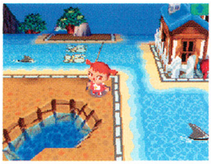
Resetti Says:

Whoa, whoa, whoa! Before you spend all 32 titles on a masterpiece that would eat this octopus for dinner, remember that you still have many home interiors to design!

4 The Long-Term Strategy for Landscaping

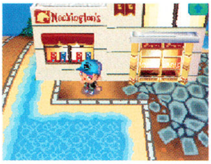
Reimagining your whole landscape will make your friends marvel. You can tell 'em this: It takes some thinking ahead, and maybe a sketch pad to map out how it all comes together. But anyone can do it!

Designing Around the No-Go Stuff



To give yourself space to work with, take out trees and flowers. That leaves you with buildings, rocks, ponds, rivers, and the beach. What to do? Create patterns that transition your effect into the permanent elements. We've made some patterns that are part "water" and part sassy blue trim that edges up to dirt surfaces.

Unpleasant Surprises?

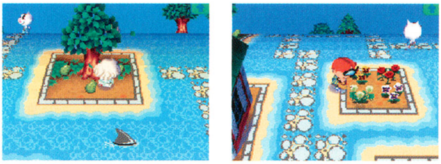


Sometimes your town will expand in ways that disrupt your perfect world of tiles. For example, when Tom Nook expands his store from Nookway to Nookington's, it'll swell in size overnight, overrunning nearby tiles. Just dip into your stash of transition patterns and rework the edging.

Resetti Says:

Don't be a dim bulb and think that you're the only player who can pull up patterns. Visitors can, too, though they can't put any down. Make sure you have good friends—and kick the bums out!

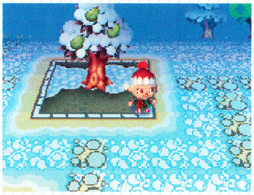
Quirks and Your Workarounds



One consequence of landscape patterns is that you can't drop objects on them. Neither can trees. Fallen fruit will bounce from tile to tile until it finds natural ground. Same goes for rocks that spit out moneybags. If you plan to milk trees and rocks, leave some extra area around 'em. Another quirk: You can't dig through patterns. You'll need to pull each one up before you can dig.

Designing for the Future

Mindblower! If you change the pattern in a save spot, every occurrence of it in your town will instantly change, too (except for those on Mabel's mannequins and the town flag, which are saved separately). It's a big time saver that can help you make over your entire town very quickly.



For example, to let our Water World go ice age in the winter, we touched up our water patterns and transition patterns with a cool palette. We didn't need to pull up and replace any tiles; we just tweaked the originals.

Home Improvement

Heard of the Happy Room Academy, the group that rates your interior design? The HRA loves rooms with perfectly matching collections of stuff. Its uptight members won't like these tips, which are about doing it your way, not theirs. Going superstyle with your home involves combining collections for unforgettable effect and creating your own carpet and wallpaper.

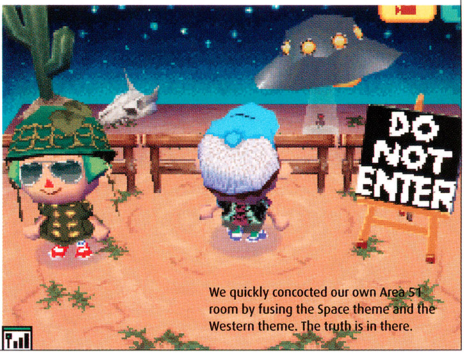
1 Meld Collections to Make Sparks

Whenever we see a room perfectly filled with the whole Mushroom series, plus the matching Forest Wall and the Forest Rug, we . . . fall . . . asleep. Zzzzz. Snore. We prefer to express ourselves. So let's yank the short mushrooms and stick a few mini buildings in the shadow of tall 'shrooms. Now it looks like an *Alice in Wonderland* fantasy room to us—but we're a little weird that way.

Furniture at Your Fingertips

THE OFFICIAL GUIDE
NINTENDO

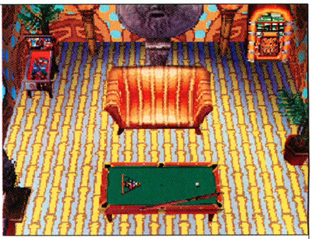
To unleash your full design potential, flip through NP's Player's Guide, which reveals the catalog of collectible stuff. That's how we get all of our crazy ideas. (We won't even divulge the room that we dreamed up when we saw the Mannequin Pis statue!)
Visit store.nintendo.com to pick up the guide that will help you stun all your friends with your vision.



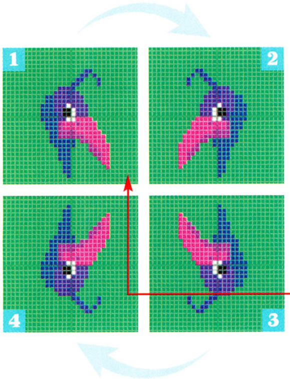
We quickly concocted our own Area 51 room by fusing the Space theme and the Western theme. The truth is in there.

2 Walls and Floors Deserve Your Full Attention

Before you design wallpaper and carpeting, think about how you want to spread it. Using a Paste As Is spread, you'll see your pattern stamped out on the floor or walls repeatedly, as shown with the bamboo floor in our Tiki Room. If you select Paste All Around, you can create much larger interior shapes.



All Around: How It Expands Your Design

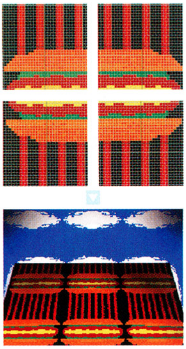


When you choose Paste All Around, one pattern spreads to four spaces. The initial pattern (#1) gets flipped around the other three squares as shown. Then the four-space megatile repeats itself.

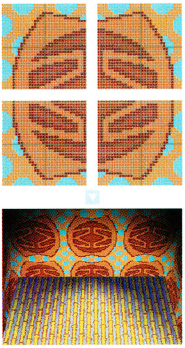
Flippin' Outrageous: Three Big Plans!

Three kinds of big shapes are possible if you exploit the flip-around strategy. Check 'em out below.

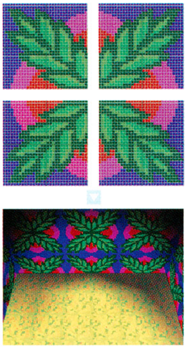
Double-Wide Shapes



Double-Tall Shapes



Radial Shapes



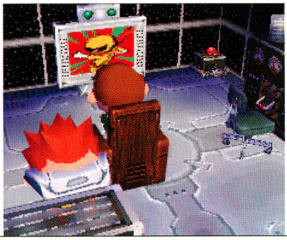
Resetti Says:

Your pockets don't have to be loaded with moolah to do this stuff. But you do need 350 bells a pop!

Visitors will go gaga when they see what you've done.

Join the Imagine Nation

Hopefully we've opened your eyes to the full design potential in Animal Crossing: Wild World. With a paint program that's easier to use and more-powerful pattern-application features than in the original AC, the DS game invites players to bring their craziest dreams to life inside their homes and across the whole town. And as more people migrate to the expanding world of ACWW, we'll all witness town transformations that will make eyes pop and jaws drop. We're looking forward to seeing your superstyle!



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MONKEY 'ROUND

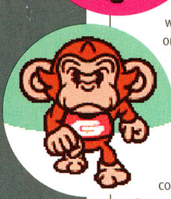
Racing goes wild as Sega's simians roll their way onto the DS in Super Monkey Ball: Touch & Roll.

By Andy Myers

Two screens, touch control, and portability steer the Super Monkey Ball franchise in a new direction. Join us for a well-rounded look at the series' DS debut and an interview with series creator Toshihiro Nagoshi.

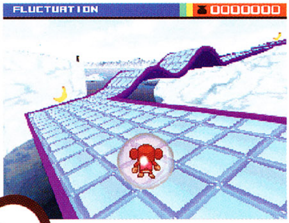
Monkeys? Balls? We vote yes.

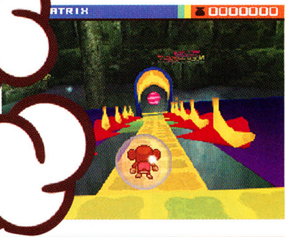
How They Roll

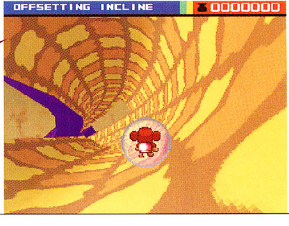


AiAi, MeeMee, GonGon, and Baby are back to doing what they do best: collecting bananas while rolling around in giant, see-through spheres. Though the premise hasn't changed a bit, Touch & Roll uses the unique functions of the Nintendo DS to breathe new life into the franchise. In both Super Monkey Ball titles for GCN, the main modes put you in control of the environment (rather than the monkey) as you use the analog stick to tilt the ground this way and that—gravity takes care of moving the monkey ball. In Touch & Roll, the same principle applies, but using the DS touch screen. Slide the stylus in any direction, and watch the world tilt along with it. The action takes place on the top screen, while the bottom screen displays a close-up animation of your monkey, showing how fast it's rolling at any given moment.

In Touch & Roll's Challenge mode, you'll face 120 unique stages, each offering new obstacles that you must master in order to guide your monkey safely to the goal while collecting the maximum number of bananas. Bumpers, moving platforms, steep slopes—anything's fair game in Touch & Roll's stages, which range from incredibly short and easy to ridiculously long and difficult. And as you progress through the six themed worlds, you can choose to go back and







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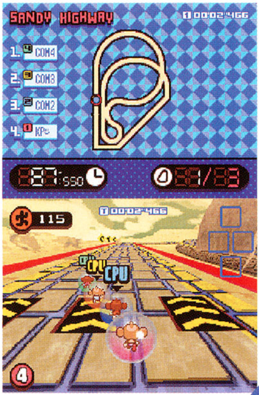
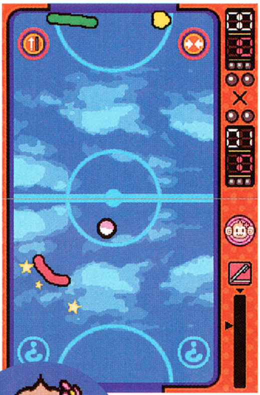


Race your monkey against CPUs, or compete wirelessly with friends.



Air hockey gets the touch-screen treatment in Touch & Roll.

practice each stage one at a time (using Practice mode) and save multiple replays of your best runs (using Replay mode).

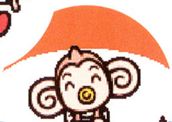
It's a Primate Party

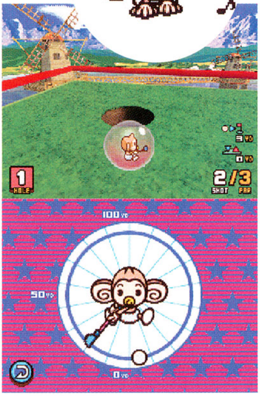
As in previous Super Monkey Ball titles, it's the party games that push the whole monkeys-in-balls concept over the edge. Monkey Race, Monkey Fight, Monkey Bowling, and Monkey Mini Golf return in Touch & Roll (but with DS-influenced makeovers), along with two brand-new party games: Monkey Hockey and Monkey Wars. Monkey Hockey's Classic mode is a basic air hockey game in which you must use the stylus to control your paddle. Line Smasher mode, however, is an eccentric reinterpretation of air hockey, requiring you to draw your paddle with the stylus then move it. The paddle can be any shape you want, and its size is governed by an in-game meter. The game gets crazy as your paddle begins to break apart the harder it collides with the puck. To further add to the mayhem, Line Smasher can be played in doubles, with two players on each side of the table.

The other new party game, Monkey Wars, is a dungeon-crawling first-person shooter in which you move through one of three mazes and fire projectiles such as pies, bananas, and watermelons at opponents. Left and right movement is controlled via the touch screen, while advancing and strafing are mapped to the Control Pad. (Sorry, lefties: Monkey Wars movement requires you to hold the stylus with your right hand.)

Though wildly different, all six party games have one thing in common: each has a multiplayer mode. Multiple game cards enable up to four players to connect their DS units wirelessly and play any of the six party games in their entirety. Each game has its own set of options, allowing players to customize gameplay extensively. In addition, Touch & Roll supports DS download play: If only one player has a game card, up to four DS units can connect to play limited versions of Monkey Race, Monkey Hockey, and Monkey Wars.

Though Touch & Roll resembles previous Super Monkey Ball titles in many ways, it has been carefully customized for the DS hardware. Some may find the control scheme to be uncomfortable (see our dueling game reviews on page 88), but only hands-on time with the game will determine whether it's for you. Expect Touch & Roll to hit store shelves in February.





Classic SMB party game Monkey Mini Golf translates well to the DS.

MONKEY BUSINESS

SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

NP gets up close with Super Monkey Ball's creator, Toshihiro Nagoshi, as he shares his thoughts on the franchise's first DS title.

NINTENDO POWER: What were some of the challenges in bringing Super Monkey Ball to the DS?
TOSHIHIRO NAGOSHI: We wanted to make the game enjoyable for players to play with the stylus. Because we didn't port the game directly from the console version, we were able to develop this game relatively smoothly.

NP: Has touch-screen control and dual-screen viewing opened new doors for the franchise?
TN: Yes. Developing with the stylus and touch screen in mind have opened up other opportunities to be creative and fun. The party game Monkey Hockey allows the player to draw their own hockey [paddle] with the stylus, then grab the [paddle] with the stylus to hit the puck back and forth. In Monkey Wars, players can control the three-dimensional movement of their character while using the stylus to throw pies and such at their monkey rival.

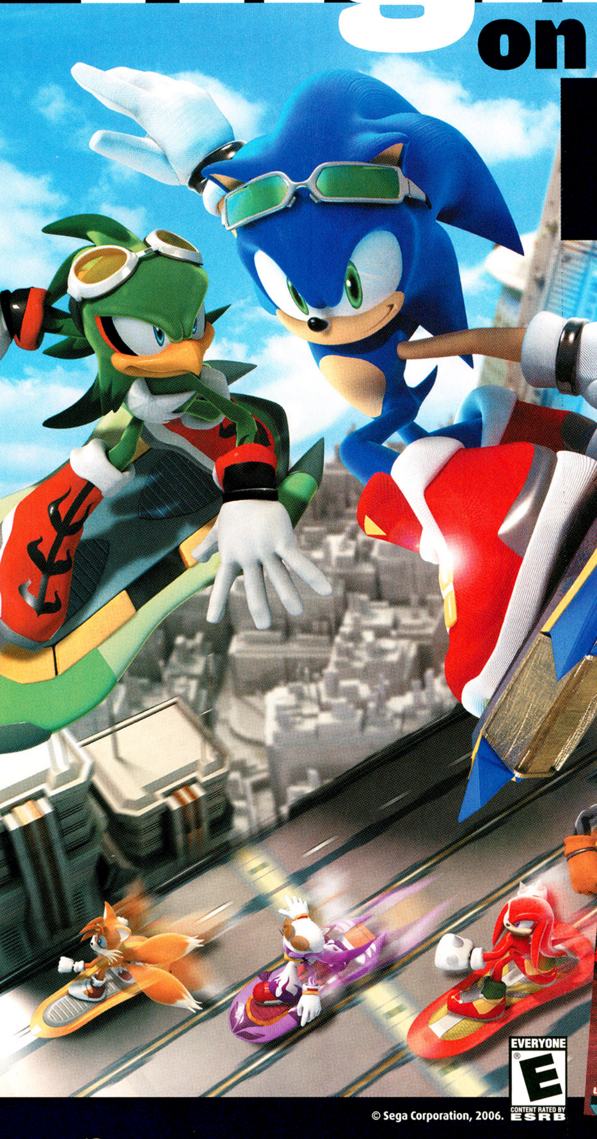
NP: Touch & Roll's party games are well-suited to the DS hardware. What were some of the inspirations for the new minigames?
TN: We generally discuss and come up with ideas as a team, so there weren't specific incidents that I can recall drawing inspiration from. However, the new multiplayer party games in Touch & Roll were carefully selected from a big list of proposed ideas for new party games.

NP: Were you able to get the results you were expecting with the touch screen?
TN: For the story mode, we were able to come up with better-than-expected simplified controls that are more unique and fun.

NP: Were there any touch screen ideas that didn't make the game's final cut?
TN: It's a secret for the next version. . . [smiles]

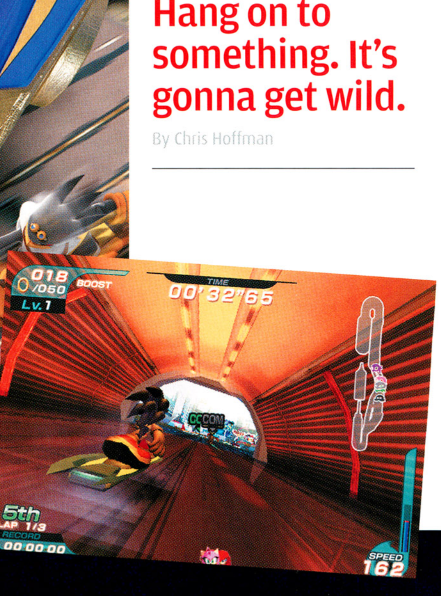
NP: Where do you see the Super Monkey Ball franchise going from here? Can we expect more DS games?
TN: That is a secret as well; however, I'm always thinking about the possibilities and potential of the franchise.

High on the Hog



Hedgehogs, racing, and extreme sports collide in Sonic Riders for GCN. Hang on to something. It's gonna get wild.

By Chris Hoffman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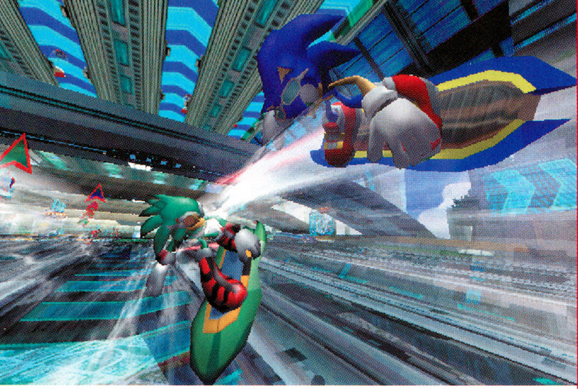
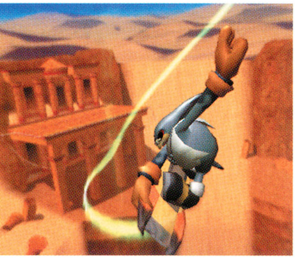


Blazing speed. Crazy stunts. Intense competition. And at the forefront of it all is the world's most famous hedgehog. Sonic the Hedgehog has been shattering the sound barrier for nearly 15 years, and Sonic Team has harnessed that legacy and channeled it into the Blue Blur's latest racing game: Sonic Riders for GCN.

Sonic Riders is all about two things: going wickedly fast and looking good doing it. "Full speed ahead" is the default; once you're out of the starting gate, you're off like a rocket. The hoverboards—called Extreme Gear—don't even bother with a gas pedal. The breakneck pace is somewhat disorienting until you get accustomed to the snowboardlike controls, but after a little practice you'll appreciate getting to concentrate on more-important things, like jumping, performing tricks, and managing the air gauge. Using "air" is arguably the most important gameplay aspect of Sonic Riders. It's used for boosting, airsliding (akin to power-sliding in other racing games), and releasing small tornadoes to get rivals off your tail. If the air gauge empties completely, however, you'll find yourself running instead of boarding—probably eating the other riders' dust—until you manage to re-energize at a pit stop or by some other method.



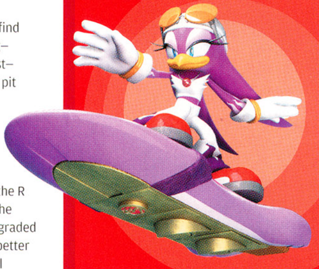
Fortunately, Sonic Riders offers plenty of ways to stay in the race. When you hit a sick jump, you can show off your tricking skills by using the analog stick in conjunction with the R Button. As impressive as they look, the stunts aren't just for show; you'll be graded on the trick when you land, and the better your grade, the more bonus air you'll receive. Just as important is the game's Turbulence effect. When characters boost, they leave a powerful air tunnel in their wake, which their rivals can hitch a ride on for a substantial speed bonus—it's a great way to keep races competitive. Additionally, since this is a Sonic the Hedgehog game, the courses are littered with rings and power-up containers. Collecting rings will raise your character's level, giving him a larger air gauge and increased offensive capabilities, whereas power-up containers can hold speed boosts, invincibility barriers, magnetic barriers (for attracting rings), or simply a resupply of air.

As it turns out, the high-speed thrills of Extreme Gear racing provide the perfect backdrop for Dr. Eggman's latest emerald-based scheme. The wily doctor is hosting the EX World Grand Prix, but he's requiring a Chaos Emerald as an entry fee from all participants, with the winner to take them all. Sound a bit fishy? And just to make sure Sonic and pals join in the fun, Eggman's enlisted the help of the best racers he could find: Jet the Hawk, Wave the Swallow, and Storm the Albatross, collectively known as the Babylon

ROGUES' GALLERY

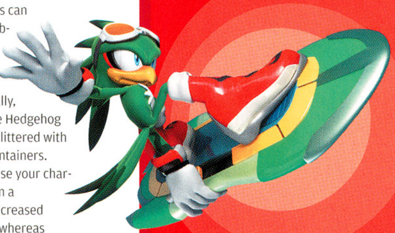
Making their debut in Sonic Riders are three new characters known as the Babylon Rogues. These feathered foes are fast, tough, and far more experienced at using Extreme Gear than Sonic and his entourage are. According to legend, long ago there lived a gang of thieves also called the Babylon Rogues, and their treasure remains hidden to this day. Could these beaked bullies be descendants of the original Rogues?

WAVE *the swallow*



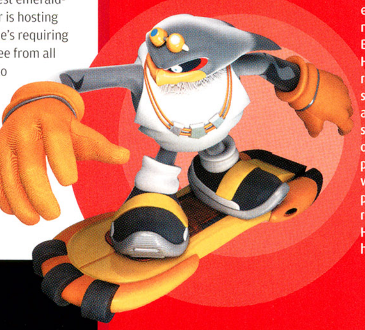
Wave is the Rogues' mechanical genius. Her ability to modify and enhance Gear is beyond compare, and she'll take any opportunity to brag about her superiority. Wave's special ability is flight, which allows her to find secret routes that her comrades can't reach.

JET *the hawk*



Cocky and arrogant, Jet the Hawk is the leader of the Babylon Rogues. Jet has been nicknamed the Legendary Wind Master due to his skill on a Gear, and he carries a mysterious box that has been passed down from the ancient Babylonians. When it comes to speed, Jet may be the toughest challenge Sonic has faced.

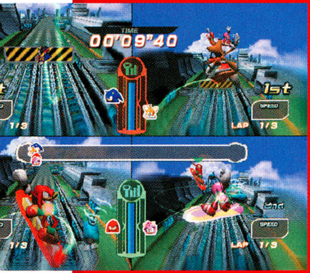
STORM *the albatross*



This hulking powerhouse is the muscle behind the Babylon Rogues. He's not the fastest racer, but the short-tempered avian has the strength to smash obstacles out of his path, making him well-suited to his position as Jet's right-hand-man. He stutters when he gets frustrated.

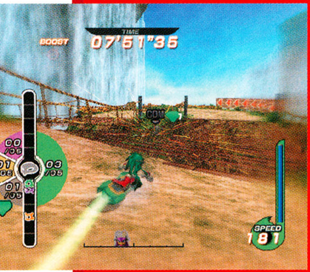
HEDGEHOG HEAD-TO-HEAD

Sonic Team has made a concerted effort to include plenty of multiplayer options in Sonic Riders. Split-screen Free Race and World Grand Prix modes let multiple players enjoy the fun of the single-player game, while Tag mode and two types of Survival modes offer completely different kinds of challenges. They can also be played solo with CPU opponents if you desire.

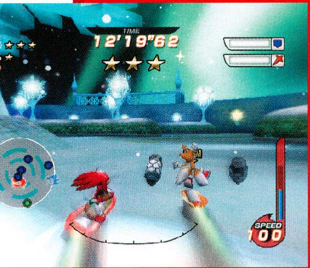


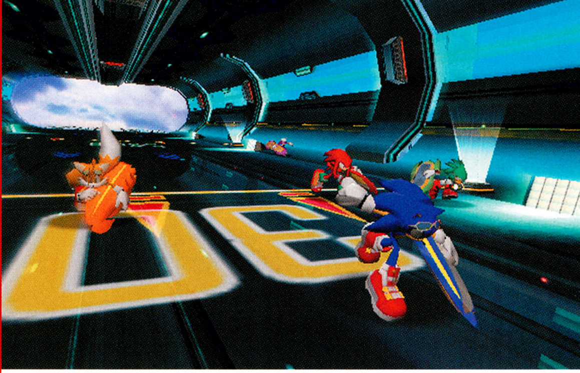
Two teams of two face off in **Tag mode**, with each pair sharing a single air gauge. Staying close to your partner and riding his Turbulence when necessary will help you clinch the victory. If you get too far ahead of your teammate, you'll be zapped as punishment for your lack of teamwork.

In **Survival Race mode**, the goal is to grab the Chaos Emerald laying on the course, then rush through special gates to score points; the first one to reach a predetermined point total wins the match. Of course, the emerald is like a giant target on your back—everyone will be hunting you down to take possession of it—and if you run out of air, the gem will return to its place on the course.



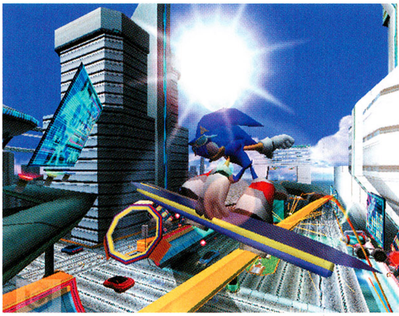
As its name implies, **Survival Battle mode** is more about inflicting damage on your opponent than it is about pure racing skill. Each arena has different nuances and challenges: Dual Towers allows for straightforward battling and features evil crows that attack players at random; Snow Valley has a stealth element whereby your opponents may be invisible to radar; and Space Theater forces you to damage your foes indirectly by knocking them into electric barriers or out of the arena and into space.



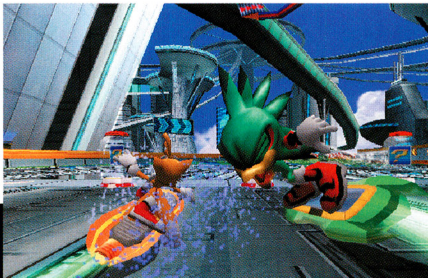


Rogues. When the trio punks out Sonic, Tails, and Knuckles and disses them like they're in an '80s skateboarding flick, it's on.

Several other characters are ready to ride, as well. Sonic's would-be girlfriend, Amy Rose, is set to get extreme; Cream the Rabbit has a need for speed; and the darker side of the Sonic universe is represented by faux hedgehog Shadow, Rouge the Bat, and Dr. Eggman himself. Other Sega characters make guest appearances, too; we can't say who, but let's just say that some dreams will come true. Characters fall into one of three categories—Speed, Fly, or Power—each with innate special skills. Speed characters can grind on rails, Power characters can destroy certain obstacles without penalty, Fly characters have limited hovering capabilities. Riders' ratings in dash, power, cornering, and air-gauge limit are determined by their Extreme Gear, and you can exchange rings for more-powerful Gear at the shop. Some Gear even add special abilities (like letting any character grind).



Sixteen courses await the challengers, from the frenetic freeways of Metal City to the raging rivers of Splash Canyon to the dusty desert of Sand Ruin. Some levels, like the Babylon Garden, hover high in the sky, where a missed turn will send you plummeting over the edge and into last place. Every course is designed for maximum thrills, with winding pathways, insane jumps, ability-based shortcuts, and other unique elements, such as the Egg Factory's lava traps and the Green Cave's giant roots that you can ride at any angle. Each course also contains a special segment that offers a brief respite from the normal racing action. In these sections, your rider is transported automatically—be it by river rapids, a huge crossbow, or an enormous centipede—and you must spin the analog stick to pick up speed and refill your air gauge.



Though the story mode is the meat of Sonic Riders, numerous other modes are included. Free Race (a competition for up to four players on the track of your choice), Time Attack, and World Grand Prix (five courses in sequence for one or two players) are just what you'd expect, plus the game features Tag and Survival modes, designed specifically for multiplayer fun. No matter how you decide to ride, Sonic Riders promises to let you go hog wild.

LORD OF THE BOARD

INTERVIEW WITH: *Takashi Yuda, producer of Sonic Riders*

Sonic Riders producer Takashi Yuda has worked on some of the greatest games of the 16-bit era, such as Revenge of Shinobi, Castle of Illusion, and Quackshot, and first became involved with the Sonic series when Sonic the Hedgehog 3 hit the Sega Genesis. He's also known for directing Sega cult classics like Space Channel 5 and Puyo Pop. Yuda stepped out of the development fast lane to discuss Sonic's most extreme outing yet.

Nintendo Power: What made Sega want to give Sonic another go at the racing genre?
Takashi Yuda: We've received many requests from Sonic fans for another racing game starring Sonic and his friends. We thought the racing genre always made sense for Sonic since he is known for his speed in the video gaming world. It was always a matter of finding a cool race type to put Sonic and his friends in that would be both fun and exciting for the fans to play. And with extreme action racing, we think we've found that vehicle, so we decided to go for it and created Sonic Riders.

> "Racing on hoverboards gives the feel of snowboarding/skateboarding and surfing all rolled into one."

NP: What made you decide to create a racing game that's so unique compared to the norm—such as having no gas pedal and incorporating stunts into the gameplay?
TY: Sonic games have always allowed a wide variety of features and elements. By eliminating the gas pedal we allow the player to concentrate on performing the multitude of tricks, including grinding the rails, riding the Turbulence, and pulling off all the aerial tricks possible.

NP: I've heard that Sonic Riders was inspired by the boards in *Back to the Future Part II.* Can you explain how the idea evolved from that inspiration into the game?
TY: We know Sonic is famous for his speed. When we were thinking about a sport Sonic himself would like to participate in, the only thing that came to mind was boarding. Boarding allows Sonic and friends to not only experience great speed, but also do tricks, like grinding on pipes and rails, and aerial maneuvers. We also implemented a Turbulence system that brings a new dimension to the gameplay. When you are passed by one of the other characters, he or she leaves a Turbulence trail that you can hop on and ride, [allowing you to] pull off tricks and increase your speed as well. Boarding also opened up wild environment-design possibilities. You'll find yourself racing in a forest, in a factory, in the desert, amongst a wide variety of other landscapes.

NP: Is it safe to say that Sonic Riders was also influenced a lot by snowboarding?
TY: As Sonic and his friends have snowboarded/skateboarded in the previous Sonic titles, we took examples from the past for Sonic Riders, too. We felt that the "boarding" sports allowed more gameplay elements than, say, car racing. Racing on hoverboards gives the feel of snowboarding/skateboarding and surfing all rolled into one. We can also design the levels to bring out the feel of one of these sports at different times. For example, adding pipes on the track for grinding brings out the skateboarding rail-grinding feel. Shredding the Turbulence is like riding in the half-pipe in either snowboarding or surfing. Then there are times we put water or sand in a part of a track and it feels like you are truly surfing, as well.

NP: Does anyone on the development team participate in real-life snowboarding, and did that influence the game's development?
TY: The director and I go snowboarding. We love the sport and in an unconscious sort of way perhaps our love of the sport had some influence on this project.

NP: Did you do any special research on racing or extreme sports for the creation of the game?
TY: We researched many different types of sports, especially the extreme-type sports. We didn't try to perform any crazy tricks on skateboards or our snowboards, but the research gave us a great idea of how the game should feel.

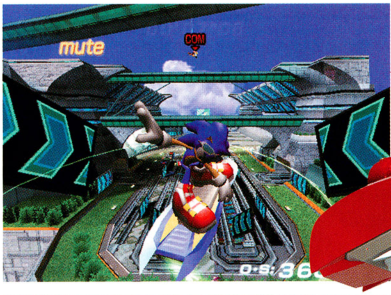
NP: What do you think makes the courses in Sonic Riders especially exciting?
TY: In the world of Sonic, there are no limitations. We designed the levels so the player can experience what it would be like to be Sonic and have his skills. Take a look at the screenshots of the levels, and you'll get a great idea of what's in store for you when you pick up that controller and start racing.

NP: What would you say are the most important elements of great course design?
TY: The most important point we took into consideration was Sonic's skills. We designed the courses that would allow Sonic to show off his abilities; if we stuck to conventional racecourse design and didn't consider Sonic's special skills, then the courses could have ended up being less fun.

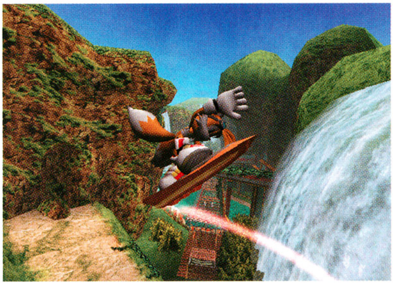
NP: Which course is your favorite to compete on? And which character is

"In the world of Sonic, there are no limitations. We designed the levels so the player can experience what it would be like to be Sonic and have his skills."

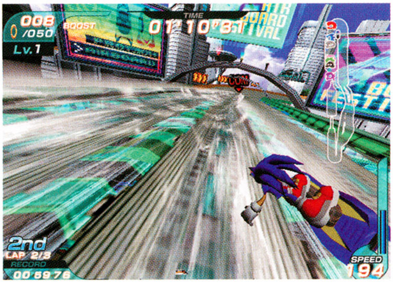
your favorite to use?
TY: I like Green Cave, which is a jungle stage. It's great to go racing through a dense jungle at high speeds, then grind on vines, and end up riding on the back of a giant centipede. Out of all the characters, I like playing Jet. I like his bad-boy image.



NP: How would you describe the new characters, Jet, Wave, and Storm? Why did you feature them as the adversaries instead of old characters like Shadow or Rouge?
TY: There is no racing without rivals, right!? We had them appear as characters that are somewhat close to the Sonic family, but not the same. This way we could get a diverse group of racers together for really good competition.



NP: How do the three character types (Speed, Fly, and Power) affect gameplay? What are their advantages and disadvantages?
TY: The tracks are designed so that there are certain advantages for certain character types. But it is up to the player to find these advantages and use them wisely. The winning factor in any race is the player's ability to take advantage of their character's skills.



NP: What is the purpose of the areas on each course where you're required to spin the analog stick, and what made you want to include that aspect in the game?
TY: We wanted to make Sonic Riders not only fun for older gamers, but younger gamers as well. We added the spin-the-joystick elements to give younger players new perspective on playing a racing game.

NP: How did your previous development experience with Sonic games help with the creation of Riders?
TY: Working on previous Sonic titles really teaches you what Sonic is all about. Speed and agility are Sonic's strong suits, and it helped us in the design of Sonic Riders to focus on those skills.

NP: How would you compare Sonic Riders to Sonic R in terms of its design and philosophy?
TY: I feel that Sonic R gave each character a unique characteristic and let the user decide how to race on the course. In contrast, in Sonic Riders we wanted to emphasize the personality of the characters as well, and create a tighter but more flexible racing system.

NP: Was there anything you liked about Sonic R that you wanted to incorporate into Sonic Riders?
TY: We really wanted to provide more unique abilities for all the characters, similar to what Sonic R had. However, we didn't incorporate this because we wanted to ensure that the player felt the game was balanced, regardless of the character they chose.

NP: Are there any special features or secrets that will appeal especially to longtime Sega fans or Sonic fans?
TY: Yes, there are lots of big surprises for Sonic fans and Sega fans! But unfortunately, I cannot say anything about it in detail since if I tell you this now it won't be a secret. I hope you will understand.

NP: Even though Sonic Riders is just coming out, have you given any thought to how you might make a sequel on Revolution?
TY: To be honest, my knowledge about the technology of Revolution is not adequate to provide my deep thoughts, but I feel it could potentially take Sonic Riders to the next dimension based upon the information I currently have.

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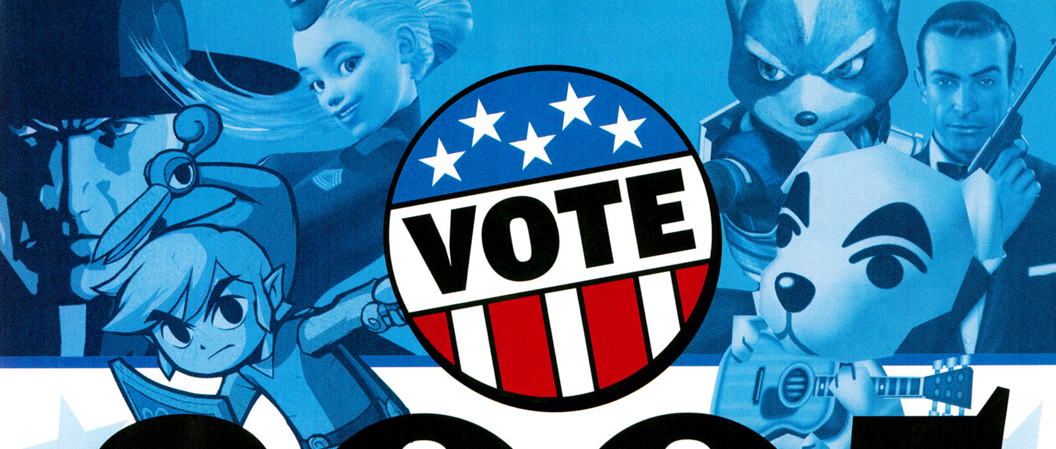


2005 Nintendo Power Awards

Nominations

It's time to choose the best of the best from 2005. Peruse the nominees, then vote for your favorites on the Player's Poll card. We'll have the results in Volume 203.

A Game of the YEAR

GCN

With six nominations, Capcom's Resident Evil 4 is this year's 800-pound gorilla. Ironically, it's up against two real 800-pound gorillas for GCN Game of the Year. OK, King Kong probably weighs more than 800 lbs., and neither he nor Donkey Kong is technically *real*, but you get the point.

1. **Donkey Kong Jungle Beat**
2. **Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance**
3. **Peter Jackson's King Kong**
4. **Prince of Persia: The Two Thones**
5. **Resident Evil 4**
6. **Tony Hawk's American Wasteland**

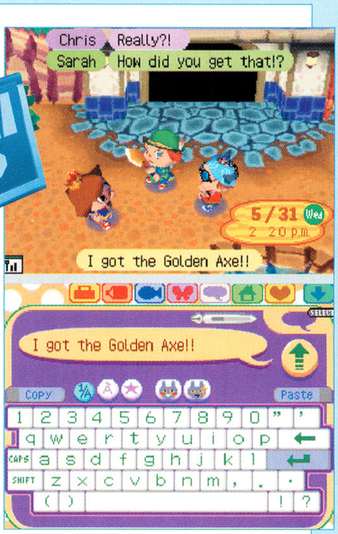
RIGHT TO BEAR
CHAINSAWS

B Game of the YEAR

DS

If you had told us a few months ago that Advance Wars: Dual Strike wouldn't make the list for DS Game of the Year, we'd have called you crazy. And probably slapped you (you had it coming). But that's indicative of how many great games came out for the dual-screened portable this year.

1. **Animal Crossing: Wild World**
2. **Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow**
3. **Mario Kart DS**
4. **Mario & Luigi: Partners in Time**
5. **Nintendogs**
6. **Sonic Rush**


Chris Really?!
Sarah How did you get that!?
5/31 Wed
2 20 p.m.
I got the Golden Axe!!

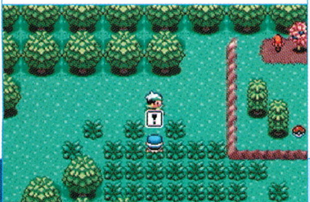
I got the Golden Axe!!

C Game of the YEAR

GBA

Talk about a clash of the titans. As beloved game franchises go, they don't get much bigger than FINAL FANTASY, The Legend of Zelda, and Pokémon. Though not as prolific, Fire Emblem, Gunstar Heroes, and WarioWare are no lightweights either.

1. **FINAL FANTASY IV Advance**
2. **Fire Emblem: The Sacred Stones**
3. **Gunstar Super Heroes**
4. **The Legend of Zelda: The Minish Cap**
5. **Pokémon Emerald**
6. **WarioWare: Twisted!**

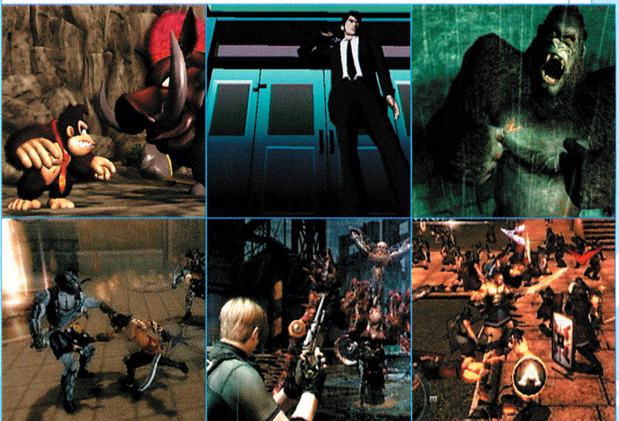


D Best GRAPHICS

GCN

The quality of a game's graphics shouldn't be judged solely by its technical merits. Elements like art direction and character design can contribute to the visual appeal every bit as much as polygon counts. It's the work as a whole that makes a painting a masterpiece, not just the brushwork or the quality of the canvas.

1. **Donkey Kong Jungle Beat**
2. **Killer 7**
3. **Peter Jackson's King Kong**
4. **Prince of Persia: The Two Thones**
5. **Resident Evil 4**
6. **Spartan: Total Warrior**



E

Best GRAPHICS

Handheld (GBA / DS)

Who says 2-D is dead? Titles like Dawn of Sorrow and Gunstar Super Heroes pushed the art form to new heights with unprecedented animation quality and some of the most beautiful hand-drawn sprites ever crafted. Meanwhile, Mario Kart DS and American Sk8land proved that the DS is more than capable of smooth, attractive 3-D graphics.

1. **Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow**
2. **Gunstar Super Heroes**
3. **The Legend of Zelda: The Minish Cap**
4. **Mario Kart DS**
5. **Mario & Luigi: Partners in Time**
6. **Tony Hawk's American Sk8land (DS)**

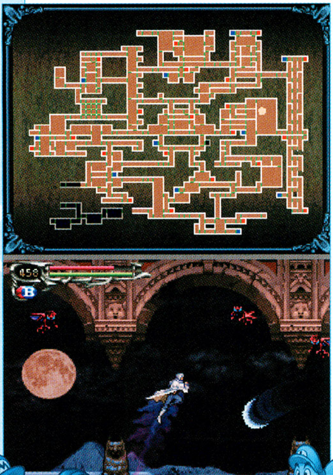
F

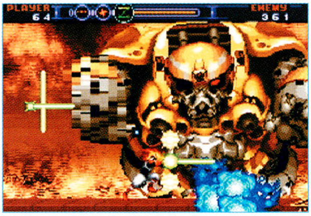
Best MUSIC

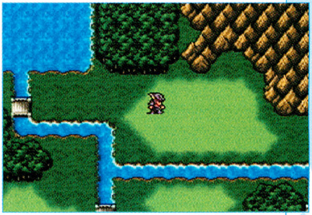
All systems

The importance of music in games is often overlooked. Whether it be a sweeping orchestral score or distortion-filled punk rhythms, a stellar soundtrack elevates the experience. The titles nominated in this category would not have been nearly as compelling without great music.

1. **Call of Duty 2: Big Red One**
2. **Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow**
3. **FINAL FANTASY IV Advance**
4. **Meteos**
5. **Prince of Persia: The Two Thones**
6. **Tony Hawk's American Wasteland**







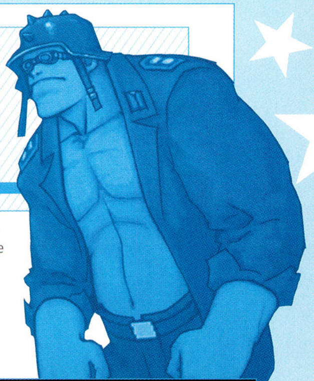
G

Best SOUND / VOICE ACTING

All systems

A chainsaw revving in the distance. Bullets whizzing past your head. The soothing voice of Sean Connery. Top-notch sound and voice acting immerse you in the game's reality, creating a world that you can lose yourself in. Or in the case of those chainsaws, lose control of your bowels.

1. **From Russia With Love**
2. **Gun**
3. **Killer 7**
4. **Medal of Honor: European Assault**
5. **Peter Jackson's King Kong**
6. **Resident Evil 4**



H Best RPG / STRATEGY GAME

All systems

During the cold winter months, there's nothing better than grabbing a blanket and some hot cocoa, curling up on the couch and spending some quality time with a good RPG or strategy game. Unfortunately, that quality time usually extends into the wee hours of the morning and results in turn-based dreams.

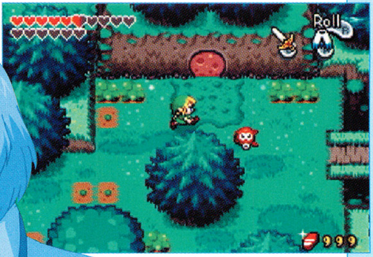
1. **Advance Wars: Dual Strike**
2. **FINAL FANTASY IV Advance**
3. **Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance**
4. **Fire Emblem: The Sacred Stones**
5. **Mario & Luigi: Partners in Time**
6. **Pokémon Emerald**

I Best ADVENTURE GAME

All systems

The past 12 months gave us a little bit of everything in the adventure genre: a finely honed Castlevania masterpiece, a surreal journey into the mind of an assassin, old-school Zelda perfection on the GBA, possibly the best movie-to-game translation of all time, the brilliant conclusion to the Prince of Persia trilogy, and a shocking reinvention of survival horror.

1. **Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow**
2. **Killer 7**
3. **The Legend of Zelda: The Minish Cap**
4. **Peter Jackson's King Kong**
5. **Prince of Persia: The Two Thrones**
6. **Resident Evil 4**



REELECT
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DISTRICT
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VAMPIRES ARE
PEOPLE TOO

J Best PLATFORMER

All systems

Donkey Kong and Sega's hedgehogs nearly monopolized this year's nominees for best platformer. DK's games focused on inventive new gameplay mechanics, while Sonic delivered more-traditional, high-speed thrills. Rounding out the list are the puzzle-heavy antics of Namco's floppy-eared . . . whatever it is Klonoa's supposed to be.

1. **DK: King of Swing**
2. **Donkey Kong Jungle Beat**
3. **Klonoa 2: Dream Champ Tournament**
4. **Shadow the Hedgehog**
5. **Sonic Gems Collection**
6. **Sonic Rush**

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029

K Best SHOOTER / ACTION GAME

All systems

Sometimes you just want to smash and/or blow stuff up. Whether it be Roman troops marching on ancient Sparta or an enemy armada orbiting planet Fortuna, the following games let you do just that. The Incredible Hulk even lets you hurl innocent bovines, though such behavior is frowned upon in some circles.

1. **Battalion Wars**
2. **Gunstar Super Heroes**
3. **The Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction**
4. **Mega Man Zero 4**
5. **Spartan: Total Warrior**
6. **Star Fox Assault**

L Best SPORTS / RACING GAME

All systems

Sadly, most of us will never get to play in the NFL or go 10 rounds with Bernard Hopkins. But that's what the nominees for best sports/racing game are for. They allow us to enjoy the wide world of sports without risk of concussion (unless an ill-tempered friend throws a controller at you).

1. **Fight Night Round 2**
2. **Madden NFL 06**
3. **Mario Kart DS**
4. **MVP Baseball 2005**
5. **Super Mario Strikers**
6. **Mario Superstar Baseball**

M Best New CONCEPT

All systems

With the DS coming into its own and the Revolution looming on the horizon, the promise of innovation has never been stronger. In 2005, we saw some of that promise realized. Developers found new ways to tell stories (Killer 7), new ways to approach traditional genres (Donkey Kong Jungle Beat), and entirely new ways to play (Nintendogs).

1. **Donkey Kong Jungle Beat**
2. **Killer 7**
3. **Kirby Canvas Curse**
4. **Meteos**
5. **Nintendogs**
6. **Trauma Center: Under the Knife**

Date
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N Best MULTIPLAYER

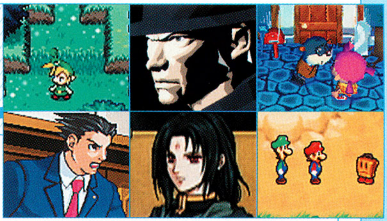
All systems

It was a banner year for multiplayer gaming as Nintendo finally went online with Mario Kart DS and Animal Crossing: Wild World. But let's not forget the immense offline satisfaction derived from destroying your opponent's home planet in Meteos or making a complete fool of yourself in Karaoke Revolution Party.

1. **Animal Crossing: Wild World**
2. **Karaoke Revolution Party**
3. **Madden NFL 06**
4. **Mario Kart DS**
5. **Meteos**
6. **Super Mario Strikers**

O Best New CHARACTER

All systems



Composed of a talking hat, a sentient suitcase and a comatose assassin with split personalities, this year's nominees for Best New Character are quite the motley crew. Honorable mention goes to Resident Evil 4's merchant. He may not have made the list, but his gruff "What are ya buyin'?" has been permanently ingrained in the gaming lexicon.

1. **Ezlo (The Legend of Zelda: The Minish Cap)**
2. **Harman Smith (Killer 7)**
3. **Lyle (Animal Crossing: Wild World)**
4. **Phoenix Wright (Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney)**
5. **Soren (Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance)**
6. **Stuffwell (Mario & Luigi: Partners in Time)**

P

Best STORY / WRITING

All systems

Every once in a while you play a game that doesn't just entertain you; it moves you, shocks you or makes you laugh so hard you lose control of your bladder. With inspired storytelling or memorable writing, a game can impact us in much the same way as a great film or novel does. The following titles achieved that lofty goal.

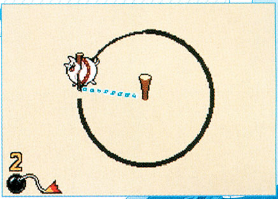
1. FINAL FANTASY IV Advance
2. Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance
3. Killer 7
4. Mario & Luigi: Partners in Time
5. Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney
6. Resident Evil 4

Q

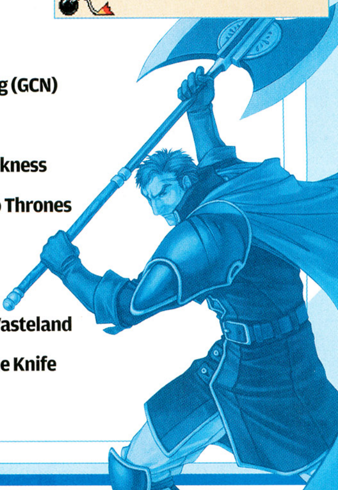
Game of the YEAR

All Systems

Now that you've had time to ponder the merits of this year's best titles, it's time to vote for the overall game of the year. We don't want to influence your vote in any way (we've heard Jimmy Carter is keeping a close eye on us), but let's just say we have chainsaws and we know where you live. Happy voting!



1. Advance Wars: Dual Strike
2. Animal Crossing: Wild World
3. Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow
4. Donkey Kong Jungle Beat
5. FINAL FANTASY IV Advance
6. Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance
7. Fire Emblem: The Sacred Stones
8. Gunstar Super Heroes
9. Killer 7
10. The Legend of Zelda: The Minish Cap
11. Mario Kart DS
12. Mario & Luigi: Partners in Time
13. Mario Superstar Baseball
14. Meteos
15. MVP Baseball 2005
16. Nintendogs
17. Peter Jackson's King Kong (GCN)
18. Pokémon Emerald
19. Pokémon XD: Gale of Darkness
20. Prince of Persia: The Two Thrones
21. Resident Evil 4
22. Sonic Rush
23. Tony Hawk's American Wasteland
24. Trauma Center: Under the Knife
25. WarioWare: Twisted!



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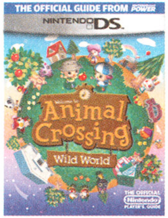
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MARCH 2006, Volume 201

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Letters A-P correspond to the Power Awards categories on pages 68-74. For each category, circle the number that matches the nominee you're voting for. Please circle only one number per category.

A.	1	2	3	4	5	6
B.	1	2	3	4	5	6
C.	1	2	3	4	5	6
D.	1	2	3	4	5	6
E.	1	2	3	4	5	6
F.	1	2	3	4	5	6
G.	1	2	3	4	5	6
H.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I.	1	2	3	4	5	6
J.	1	2	3	4	5	6
K.	1	2	3	4	5	6
L.	1	2	3	4	5	6
M.	1	2	3	4	5	6
N.	1	2	3	4	5	6
O.	1	2	3	4	5	6
P.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Choose your favorite game from the Game of the Year list on page 74, then write in the corresponding number below.

Q. ________

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MARCH 2006

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Grand Prize

1 Winner

After voting for the best games of 2005, one winner will head to the Electronic Entertainment Expo in Los Angeles to preview the best games of 2006. What will be the latest Revolution revelations? Be there in person to find out!

FIRE EMBLEM

2nd Prize

5 Winners

Play the cream of the 2005 crop with the Nintendo GameCube, Nintendo DS and Game Boy Advance Game of the Year winners as voted on by the NP readers.

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DS
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Win the game of the year

3rd Prize

50 Winners

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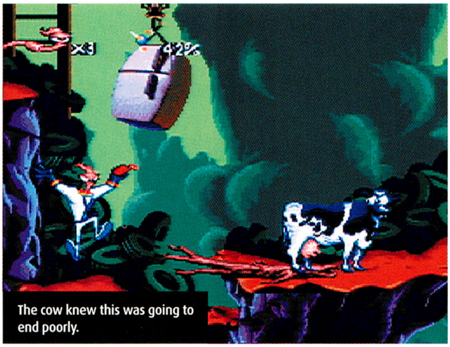
EARTHWORM JIM

Shiny's bug-eyed annelid wormed his way into our hearts with blockbuster action, off-the-wall humor, and flying bovines.

EARTHWORM JIM
SUPER NINTENDO

PLATFORM: **SNES**
DEVELOPER: **SHINY ENTERTAINMENT**
PUBLISHER: **PLAYMATES INTERACTIVE**
RELEASE DATE: **OCTOBER 1994**
COVERED IN ISSUES: **66 & 67**
EVIL GOLDFISH: **1**



The cow knew this was going to end poorly.

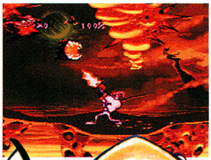
For months, many readers have been clamoring for a retro section in the magazine. Well, we aim to please. In Playback, we'll revisit some of our favorite games from yesteryear. Kicking off the festivities is one worm that's never turned, Earthworm Jim.

At a time when every developer under the sun was cranking out cute, cuddly, crappy mascot games, Earthworm Jim was funny, offbeat and decidedly non-crappy. Created by Douglas TenNapel and Shiny Entertainment, it told the tale of a regular earthworm (named Jim) who was one day struck by a "very large ultra high tech indestructible super-space-cyber-suit." The suit's ultra-high-tech space particles merged with Jim's slimy worm particles, giving birth to the greatest annelid super-hero the galaxy has ever known. (And possibly the greatest nemesis cows have ever known.)

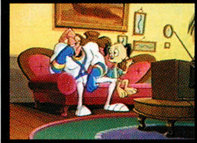
The game was action-platforming at its finest. It boasted tight controls, incredible animation (it's one of the best-looking games to come out of the 16-bit era) and tons of personality. Armed with all manner of heavy ord-nance (and hamsters), Jim blasted his way through some truly inspired levels. Rather than drag you through the typical fire level, ice level, etc., EWJ had you traversing a junkyard, hell, and even a giant intenstine. And each stage was dense with secret paths and power-ups that encouraged exploration and gave the game tons of replay value. You might spot an extra life that seemed impossible to reach, but if you looked hard enough, you'd eventually discover a way to nab it. The soundtrack by Tommy Tallarico Studios was wonderfully quirky and fit the game like a glove. When the music in hell switches from the foreboding "Night on Bald Mountain" to grating elevator music: priceless.

Perhaps the game's defining element, however, was its hilarious characters. Bosses like Professor Monkey-for-a-Head; Doc Duodenum; and Queen Pulsating, Bloated, Festering, Sweaty, Pus-Filled, Malformed Slug-for-a-Butt gave the game more personality than all of today's cookie-cutter GTA clones combined.

Sadly, it's been over 10 years since the last true Earthworm Jim game (the mediocre N64 title doesn't count). If you ask me, it's high time Shiny jacked out of the Matrix and unearthed their beloved worm.
—STEVE T.



MERCHANDISE



CARTOONS

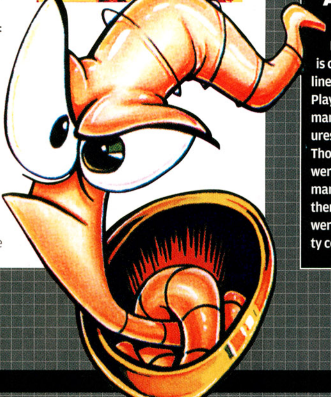
The success of the Earthworm Jim games spawned tons of other merchandise. The *Earthworm Jim* animated series, which originally aired from 1995 to 1996, is widely considered one of the best cartoons based on a video game ever produced. The voice of Jim was provided by Dan Castellaneta, better known as the voice of Homer Simpson.

COMICS

The Marvel comic series was considerably less successful than the cartoon, both creatively and commercially. It lasted only three issues and lacked the comedic punch of its source material.

ACTION FIGURES

No self-respecting superhero is complete without his own toy line. Since the game's publisher, Playmates, was primarily a toy manufacturer, action figures were a given. Though there weren't many of them, they were pretty cool.



Have a favorite classic game you'd like to see revisited?
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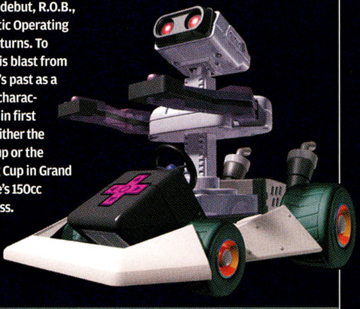
DRIVER'S ED

>MARIO KART DS

You haven't mastered Mario Kart DS until you've overcome all of the game's challenges and unlocked all of its hidden goodies. For details on the easier-to-obtain unlockables, refer to volume 199, page 64.

Racing Robot

Twenty years after he made his debut, R.O.B., the Robotic Operating Buddy, returns. To unlock this blast from Nintendo's past as a playable character, come in first place in either the Special Cup or the Lightning Cup in Grand Prix mode's 150cc Mirror class.



Kart Krazy

To gain the ability to use any kart with any character—36 karts in all—come in first place in both the Special Cup and the Lightning Cup in Grand Prix mode's 150cc Mirror class.

YOSHI
KART
15/36

Seventh Heaven

For Mario Kart masters, a secret seventh level awaits in Mission mode. To unlock this trying challenge, you must get at least one star in every mission of the first six levels—that's all 54 missions.

7-1
7-2
7-3
7-4
7-5
7-6
7-7
7-8

Amphibious Assault

>TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES 3: MUTANT NIGHTMARE (GCN)

Go to the Options menu, then select Password and enter the following codes to achieve the desired effect. Some passwords make the game easier; others make it much harder.

SLLMRSLD	**Sushi Party** All healing items from crates are temaki sushi, which completely refill health and the Ougi gauge.
MDLDSSLR	**Invincibility** Turtles take no damage and attacks bounce off.
RRDMLSDL	**Max Ougi** Infinite Ougi gauge.
LMDRRMSR	**Unlimited Shuriken** Turtles have infinite shuriken.
LDMSLRDD	**Instant Death** A single hit from an enemy attack means death.
DMLDMRLD	**Endurance** No healing items.
MSRLSMML	**Enemies 2x Power** Enemies' attack strength is doubled.
SLRMLSSM	**Enemies 2x Defense** Enemies' defensive power is doubled.
LLMSRDMS	**Shuriken Loser** Shuriken are no longer available.
RLDMRMSD	**Dino Leo Lv. 2** Acquire the scroll for Leonardo's level-2 Dino Armor.
SRDMMLRS	**Dino Mike Lv. 2** Acquire the scroll for Michelangelo's level-2 Dino Armor.
DRMDLLRS	**Dino Raph Lv. 2** Acquire the scroll for Raphael's level-2 Dino Armor.
MSSRDLMR	**Dino Don Lv. 2** Acquire the scroll for Donatello's level-2 Dino Armor.
MLMSRRDS	**Dino Leo Lv. 3** Acquire the scroll for Leonardo's level-3 Dino Armor.
LSMRRDSL	**Dino Mike Lv. 3** Acquire the scroll for Michelangelo's level-3 Dino Armor.
SMRDRSLD	**Dino Raph Lv. 3** Acquire the scroll for Raphael's level-3 Dino Armor.
DLRLDMSR	**Dino Don Lv. 3** Acquire the scroll for Donatello's level-3 Dino Armor.
RMLDDSML	**Casey & April DVD** Unlock the Casey & April CG cut-scene in the movie viewer.

From Poser to Pro

>TONY HAWK'S AMERICAN WASTELAND

Enter the Options menu and input the codes at the Cheat Codes screen; be sure to use correct punctuation and capitalization. For the "perfect" codes, you must then start the game and choose Game Options from the pause menu. Select Cheats and turn on whichever codes you wish to use.

SCORE: 0
100 X 1
TAILWHIP

the_condor
Unlock secret character Mat Hoffman.

fact!on
Unlock secret character Jason Ellis.

820 X 2
FS BOARDSLIDE + FS LIPSLIDE

hip2Dhop
Unlock secret character Lil Jon.

grindXpert
Perfect Rail:
Never lose your balance during grinds.

2wheels!
Perfect Manual:
Never lose your balance during manuals.

11,369 X 17
WRAP AROUND + WRAP AROUND + HANDSTAND

44,540 X 1
SKITCHIN

h!tchar!de
Perfect Skitch:
Never lose your balance while skitching.

Festive Fighting

>TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES 3: MUTANT NIGHTMARE (DS)

Go to the Options menu and choose Input Password. Enter any of the following codes to change the appearance of certain items in the game.

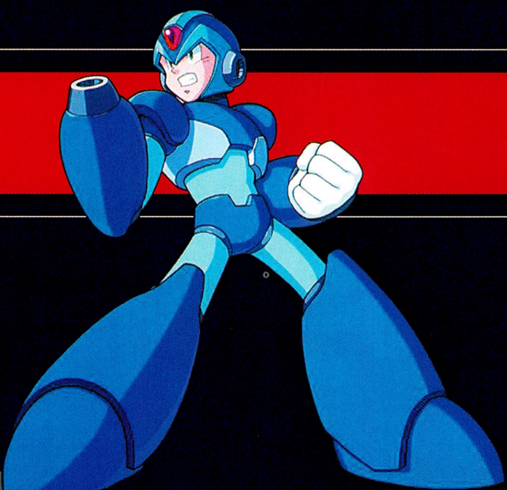
DDRMLRDS	Health power-up becomes pizza.
SRDSLLMS	Crystals become Easter eggs.
DRSSMRLD	Crystals become Jack-o-Lanterns; background music changes.
LLDMSRMD	Crystals become Santa Claus heads; background music changes.

Chimp Cheats

>DONKEY KONG COUNTRY 3

Activate these cheat codes by going to the Options menu, then entering the Cheats screen and inputting the code of your choice. A correct entry will automatically bump you out of the code-input screen.

E-X-T-R-A-S	Unlock the Extras menu, where you can play DKC3's minigames.
M-U-S-I-C	Access the music player.
H-A-R-D-E-R	If you start a new game, levels won't have Star Barrels.
T-U-F-F-E-R	If you start a new game, levels won't have DK Barrels or Star Barrels.
K-R-E-D-I-T-S	View the game's credits.
M-O-N-K-E-Y	Gain an additional 50 lives.
A-Q-U-A	Get all 98 Bonus Coins.



X-CEPTIONAL SECRETS

>MEGA MAN X COLLECTION

The Race Is On

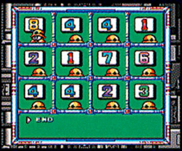
To unlock the Mega Man racing game, Mega Man Battle & Chase, **beat Mega Man X, Mega Man X2, and Mega Man X3.** Mega Man Battle & Chase will be added to the game-select screen.

Powered-Up Passwords

Enter these passwords at the continue screens for the first three Mega Man X games to start with all weapons and upgrades and at the most advanced stage possible.

Mega Man X

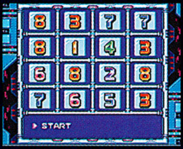
Start on Sigma Stage 1 with all Sub-Tanks, all Heart Tanks, and all upgrades.



8 4 4 1
2 1 7 6
4 4 2 3
▶ END

Mega Man X2

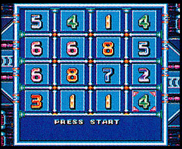
Start on Sigma Stage 3 with all Sub-Tanks, all Heart Tanks, all Zero parts, and all upgrades.



8 3 7 7
8 1 4 3
6 8 2 8
7 6 5 3
▶ START

Mega Man X3

Start on Doppler Stage 1 with all Sub-Tanks, all Heart Tanks, all Ride Armor, all upgrades, and the Z-Saber. This password does not give you any of the optional Super Chip upgrades.



5 4 1 4
6 6 8 5
6 8 7 2
3 1 1 4
PRESS START

Amazing Armor

Fighting Sigma is hard work. Give the Maverick Hunters an extra advantage by using these codes to unlock the powerful Ultimate Armor for X and the Black Armor for Zero in Mega Man X4 through X6. Directions can be input with either the Control Pad or the analog stick.

Mega Man X4

Ultimate Armor X: Highlight **Mega Man X** on the character-select screen. Press the **X Button twice**, press **left six times**, then **hold L and Z and press A. Continue holding L and Z** until the level begins (feel free to press Start to skip the cut-scene and A to skip the dialogue). If the code was entered correctly, X's upper arms and legs will be a purplish tint. After you **finish the Sky Lagoon** introductory level, **enter Web Spider's level** and go to the location where the Leg Module usually is. Dr. Light will have different dialogue and you'll be presented with the Ultimate Armor.

Black Armor Zero: Highlight **Zero** at the character-select screen. **Press and hold the R Button**, then press **right six times** and **release R. Hold the X Button** and **press Start or A. Continue holding X** until the anime cut-scene ends (feel free to press Start to skip it). When the level starts, Zero will appear in his Black Armor.

Mega Man X5

Ultimate Armor X: At the character-select screen, **highlight Mega Man X** and press **up twice**, press **down nine times**, then **press Start**. You'll start the first stage in the Ultimate Armor.

Black Armor Zero: At the character-select screen, **highlight Zero** and press **down twice**, press **up nine times**, then **press Start**. You'll start the game as Black Armor Zero.

Mega Man X6

Ultimate Armor X: At the title screen, **highlight Game Start** and press **left three times** and **right once. You'll hear a sound** confirming that the code worked. **Press Start** to begin with the Ultimate Armor.

Black Armor Zero: At the title screen, ***highlight Game Start*** and press the **L Button three times** then the **R Button once. You'll hear a sound** confirming that the code worked. When you meet up with Zero, he'll have his Black Armor on.

Genetic Gifts

>X-MEN LEGENDS II: RISE OF APOCALYPSE

Apocalypse won't stand a chance once the X-Men and the Brotherhood have access to these cheats. All codes use the Control Pad, not the analog stick.

Go to the Review menu (either from the title screen or while at the base) and enter these codes to unlock the game's bonus features.

Unlock all comics:
→ ← ← → ↑ ↑ → START

Unlock all concept art:
← → ← → ↑ ↑ ↓ START

Unlock all cinematics:
← → → ← ↓ ↓ ← START

Unlock all load screens:
→ ← → ← ↑ ↑ ↓ START

Enter this code while in Beast's shop.

Gain an extra 100,000 tech bits:
↑ ↑ ↑ ↓ → → START

Enter the Danger Room menu from the base (not the title screen) and enter this code.

Unlock all Danger Room courses:
→ → ← ← ↑ ↓ ↑ ↓ START

Enter the Team Management menu (either from the pause screen or when at an Xtraction Point) to input these codes.

Unlock all available skins:
↓ ↑ ← → ↑ ↑ START

Unlock all powers for characters on the current team:
← → ← → ↓ ↑ START

Set all heroes to level 99:
↑ ↓ ↑ ↓ ← ↑ ← → START

Unlock all heroes:
→ ← ← → ↑ ↑ ↑ START

Enter these codes while playing the game. You can pause the game if you wish.

God mode (take no damage and use no energy):
↓ ↑ ↓ ↑ → ↓ → ← START

Infinite Xtreme tokens:
← ↓ → ↓ ↑ ↑ ↓ ↑ START

Melee attacks do 32,000 damage:
← ← → ← → ↑ START

Move extremely fast:
↑ ↑ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↓ START

Ultimate Unlockables

>ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN (GCN)

To unlock the web-swingin' bonus content of your choice in Ultimate Spider-Man, pause the game and enter the Options menu. Access the Controller Setup screen and input any of the following codes with either the Control Pad or the analog stick. You'll hear a sound if you enter the code correctly. Go to the Unlockables menu (available after the training mission) to view the previously hidden content.

Unlock all characters:
→ ↓ → ↓ ← ↑ ← →

Unlock all comic covers:
← ← → ← ↑ ← ← ↓

Unlock all concept art:
↓ ↓ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↑ ← ←

Unlock all landmarks:
↑ → ↓ ← ↓ ↑ → ←

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To contact the ESRB or for more information, visit www.esrb.org.
The Entertainment Software Rating Board evaluates each game's content and assigns one of the following ratings to reflect the appropriate age group for the game.

- EC — Early Childhood
- E — Everyone
- E10+ — Everyone (10+)
- T — Teen (13+)
- M — Mature (17+)
- AO — Adult (18+)
- RP — Rating Pending

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nintendo Wi-Fi connection

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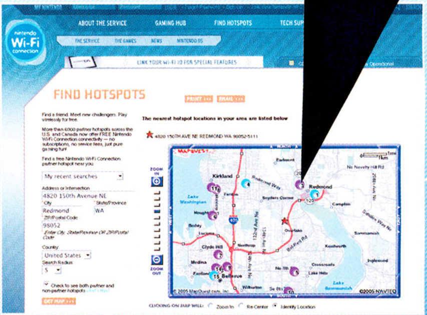

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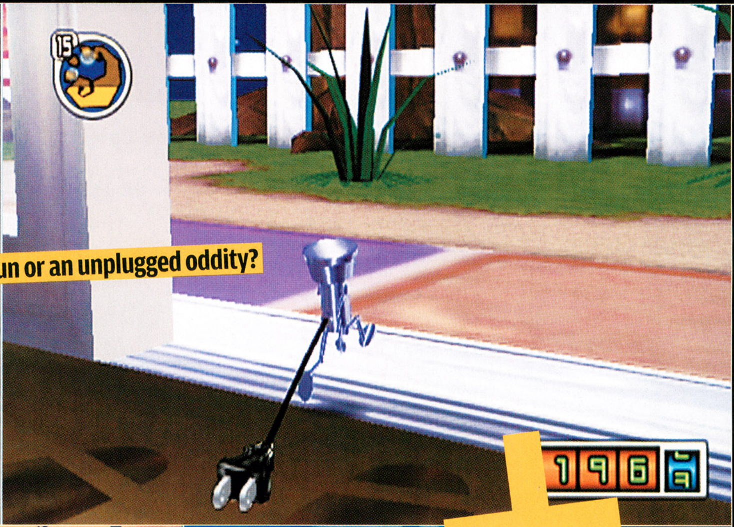
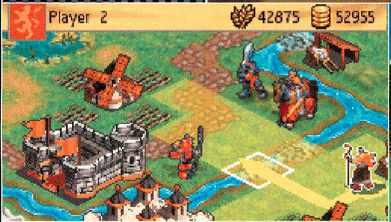
REVIEWS

In-depth reviews of the latest games



Chibi-Robo: Energized fun or an unplugged oddity?

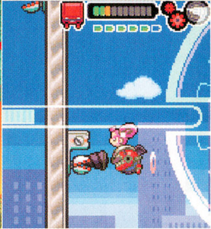
True Swing Golf, Super Monkey Ball: Touch & Roll, and more.


Player 2
42875
52955

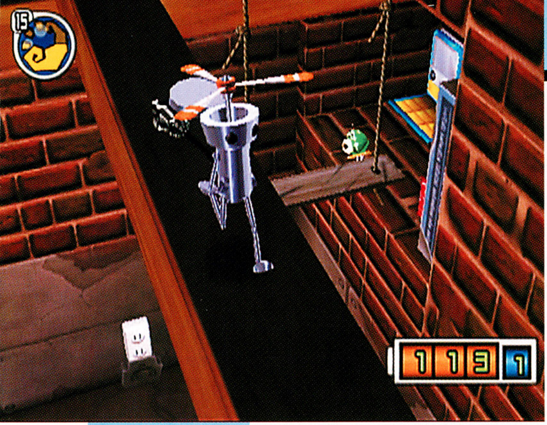
482yd
Par 5
Clive
1
Stroke 1
Score ±0
SPECIAL SHOT

85
Is Age of Empires: The Age of Kings a DS war sim for the ages?

87
We feel the magic of Sega's inspired touch title The Rub Rabbits!



88
Fun with power tools—Drill Dozer is anything but boring.



HAPPY HAPPY JOY JOY

MICRO MACHINE

CHIBI-ROBO

RATING: 8.0

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO GAMECUBE**
PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
DEVELOPER: **SKIP**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

Chibi-Robo is a different kind of hero. He doesn't save the world; he doesn't destroy any evil overlords. Instead, the diminutive robot aspires to make a single household happy by picking up the trash, wiping up stains, feeding the fish, and assisting with other assorted tasks. It's a lot more fun than it sounds, although at first you might not think so.

Despite the innate coolness of being a tiny robot in a world where humans appear as giants and furniture resembles skyscrapers, my initial reaction to Chibi-Robo was more of annoyance than excitement. What's the deal with the strange Sanderson family Chibi's thrust into the middle of? Why does the father act like a child? Why does the daughter dress as a frog and talk only in "ribbit"s? Why does everyone speak in unintelligible gibberish, and why can't I fast-forward through the accompanying text, even when I've seen it before? How come the graphics aren't more detailed? Is there anything I can do aside from throwing away trash before time runs out or Chibi's batteries run low and I'm forced to recharge? To say the game starts slowly is an understatement.

Fortunately, it isn't long before Chibi's menial labor pays off with moolah (the game's currency) and Happy Points (essentially experience points), paving the way to new abilities and longer-lasting batteries, which in turn lead to new places to explore and new tasks to accomplish. A helicopter attachment allows Chibi to hover over gaps and reach new areas; the Chibi-Blaster lets him destroy weak spots in the wall that reveal hidden passages; new costumes unlock other additional powers. The game gradually unfolds through this process of discovery, revealing its many mysteries incrementally as Chibi's rank increases.

There's never a lack of things to do in Chibi-Robo, whether you're putting your platforming skills to the test by ascending an expertly designed series of shelves and dangling cords, helping dad cook burgers, unlocking secret doors filled with moolah, or merely scrubbing an oil stain as you run from one room to another. And if you're worried that the game might get dull without any diabolical villains to thwart, you can take out your aggressions on the robotic Spydorz that spawn periodically; their scrapped parts can be recycled into tools to further aid your exploration.

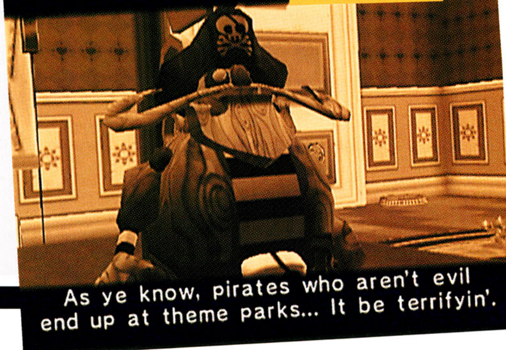
The thrill of discovery makes up a huge chunk of the game's fun, but an equally large portion comes from the bizarre characters you'll encounter as you navigate the Sanderson house.

Among them are Space Hunter Drake Redcrest, a rooster-inspired superhero; Sophie, a plush worm doll who has a mad crush on Drake; Frieda, the dehydrated frog lying in the backyard; Sunshine, a teddy bear with a nectar addiction; and Mr. Prongs, a dancing, overweight, blue-skinned dude who wears a pink bikini and has an electrical plug for a head. Everyone has a story and a problem, and solving them all lies at the heart of Chibi-Robo's gameplay. Making each quirky character happy quickly becomes an obsession, and finding the remedy to each dilemma is as satisfying as figuring out how to reach the most confoundingly distant ledge.

Beneath Chibi-Robo's goofy characters and strange story, however, lies an unexpected layer of poignancy. Amidst the colorful visuals and talk of Happy Points, the game tackles some serious issues: marital woes, environmental destruction, corporate greed, even death. Chibi-Robo successfully takes on such topics without ever being heavy-handed, and the result is a game that works on multiple levels, a la a great animated movie like *The Incredibles*.

At a time when a lot of popular games try to push the envelope and focus on the seedier side of life, it's nice to see a game like Chibi-Robo hit the scene and take gaming in the opposite direction. It's not the most challenging game, but Chibi-Robo has a lot to offer behind its supercute veneer. Nice guys *can* finish first.
—CHRIS H.

Plankbeard's childhood trauma with "Country Bear Jamboree" still haunts him.


As ye know, pirates who aren't evil end up at theme parks... It be terrifyin'.

WRITERS' BLOCK

WHAT LATE-2005 RELEASE (IF ANY) WOULD YOU ADD TO THE NP TOP 200?

During the five months in which we unveiled our Top 200 titles, several great games launched. We asked our reviewers if they would put any of them on the list.

CHRIS HOFFMAN

I can think of several, but two of my favorites are Gunstar Super Heroes and Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney. Both easily belong within the top 80.

STEVEN GRIMM

So many brilliant games came out in '05. Hard choice. But Nintendogs would have to be in the top 20—it's made such a huge impact on people.

CHRIS SHEPPERD

There's already a ridiculous number of games featuring our favorite plumber, but there has to be room on the list for Mario Kart DS, one of the best racing games of all time.

ANDY MYERS

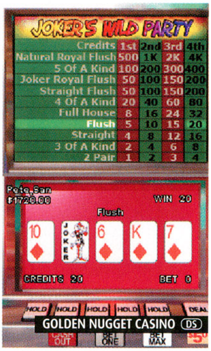
How about Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance? It just barely missed our deadline, but if there's any justice in the world, it would have cracked the top 40.

GEORGE SINFIELD

Pinball will never be the same now that Samus Aran has ricocheted off the bumpers in Morph Ball form. Metroid Prime Pinball belongs with the biggies.

STEVE THOMASON

I would have to go with Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow. It's the best game in the series since Symphony of the Night, and the number-one reason to own a DS.



Credits	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Natural Royal Flush	500	1K	2K	4K
5 Of A Kind	100	200	300	400
Joker Royal Flush	50	100	150	200
Straight Flush	50	100	150	200
4 Of A Kind	20	40	60	80
Full House	8	16	24	32
Flush	5	10	15	20
Straight	4	8	12	16
3 Of A Kind	2	4	6	8
2 Pair	1	2	3	4

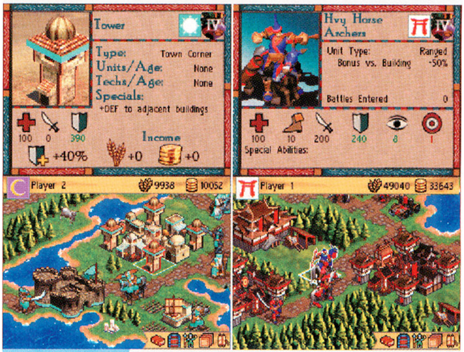
GOLDEN NUGGET CASINO (DS)

GOLDEN NUGGET CASINO DS

RATING: 6.5

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: MAJESCO
DEVELOPER: SKYWORKS
ESRB: TEEN

With poker as popular as ever, it's not much of a gamble to produce a casino game. Yet, Majesco's latest bid to attract those interested in games of chance takes the focus off the five-card draw (offering only three video poker variations) and explores other house games. The title's take on blackjack is solid but nondescript. You can pick the table limit and play with up to four AI-controlled gamblers (it's a single-player game). Just slide your chips onto the table and play. Whereas blackjack is simple, craps is more of a challenge. If you know all of the intricacies of craps betting, you'll do fine. If you don't, though, you'll be lost for a lack of rules or tutorial options. The roulette game displays the best graphics in the collection—detailed but not busy. A convenient Repeat option lets you bet the same way you did on the last spin, making it easy to keep the action moving. The only piece that's missing is a table marker that shows the winning number. Another spinning-wheel game, the money wheel, is faithfully reproduced, and is as uninteresting as it is in real life. Six slot machines round out the title. Though none of the games contain the opportunities for strategy that have made poker (and especially Texas Hold 'Em) the game of the moment, the total package makes for a fun but frivolous diversion.
—GEORGE S.



Tower
Type: Town Corner
Units/Age: None
Techs/Age: None
Specials: +DEF to adjacent buildings

Hvy Horse Archers
Unit Type: Ranged
Bonus vs. Building -50%
Battles Entered 0
Special Abilities:

CULTURE CLASH

CIV OR LET DIE

AGE OF EMPIRES: THE AGE OF KINGS

RATING: 8.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: MAJESCO
DEVELOPER: BACKBONE ENTERTAINMENT
ESRB: EVERYONE 10+

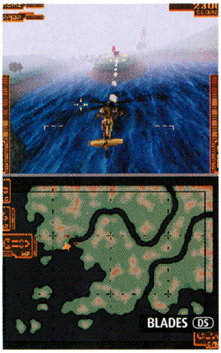
The highly inventive DS version of Age of Empires translates the the PC series' real-time strategy into a complex turn-based game. As a result, AoE: AoK moves at the snail's pace of deep, deep thought. That will be a joy for hard-core tactics fans, but a shock for AoE vets used to building up their own civilization and then snuffing out an opposing civ in 30 minutes.

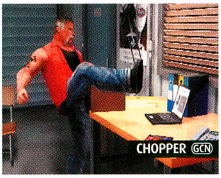
Backbone has gone much farther than merely raiding the AoE series to bring its great music, medieval art style and Civ 101 lessons to the DS. It's made an excellent tactics game that nails AoE's essential elements: You'll raise one of five civilizations (Britons, Franks, Mongols, Saracens, or Japanese) out of the dark ages, where you'll have only crude swordsmen, archers, and cavalry units, while a competing empire tries to wipe yours off the face of the earth. Should you spend your assets on a great, crude mob to crush your foe ASAP? Or will you advance your empire carefully by harvesting assets, building fortresses, and progressing through several ages of technology, ultimately producing superior troops, foe-converting monks, and superpowerful siege weapons? Most likely, you'll balance warmongering with civ-building—and that's the unique lure of the AoE series. But all of that choice translates into a turn-based system that's tough to learn. After chewing on it for a long time, however, you'll appreciate the game's substance and the near-endless replay appeal, wireless and hot-seat multiplayer modes, and many unlockables, such as maps and powerful war units.

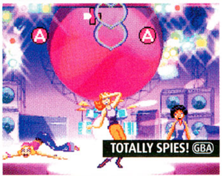
There are downsides: In striving to re-create AoE's isometric fields, the DS version makes it hard to figure out who's who during a crowded battle. It's also difficult to pick the correct unit out of a dense fray with touch control; you'll resort to using the slower button control. Consider yourself a tactics connoisseur? If you've got the patience to wrangle units, Age of Kings is a most worthy addition to your game library. —STEVEN G.

Two empires enter! One empire leaves!

Player 1
49040
33643


BLADES (DS)


CHOPPER (GCN)


TOTALLY SPIES! (GBA)

BLADES OF THUNDER 2

RATING: 4.5

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: SUMMITSOFT
DEVELOPER: INTERACTIVE VISION
ESRB: EVERYONE 10+

There are too many enemy units for any one gunship pilot to deal with in copter-action title Blades of Thunder 2. You can plug away at them—they're easy enough to defeat—but eventually their sheer numbers will wear you down. You'll run out of ammo, then get whacked like James Caan at the toll booth in *The Godfather*. The enemies don't move. They don't use tactics to defeat you. They've just been copied and pasted so many times over the game's three campaign areas that there isn't anywhere to go without being shot. While your gunship is still flying, the 3-D landscape is nice to look at (though a little too foggy to avoid clipping) and copter control is excellent, even though the vehicle is stuck at one altitude. If you want a challenge, you'll find it in Blades of Thunder 2. Just be careful what you wish for. —GEORGE S.

AMERICAN CHOPPER 2: FULL THROTTLE

RATING: 5.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION
DEVELOPER: CREAT STUDIOS
ESRB: TEEN

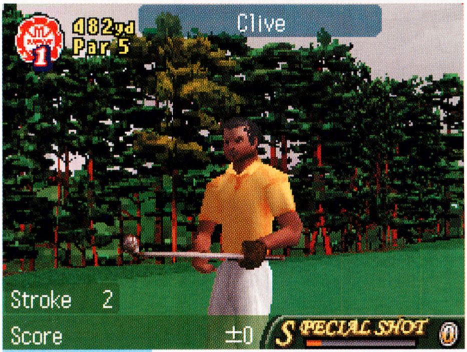
Since most of *American Chopper* takes place in a body shop, it's hard to imagine how the reality-based TV show about a father and his two sons building choppers and arguing a lot can be translated into a video game. American Chopper 2: Full Throttle takes a stab at it, putting you in the shoes of the show's characters as they build choppers then ride around looking for parts. In the game version of the shop, creating custom bikes is fairly entertaining, as are the motion-captured cut-scenes that take place between missions. But problems arise when you actually take a chopper out on the road. The riding mechanics aren't terrible, but Full Throttle's open-ended, GTA-wannabe world just doesn't work. The graphics are unappealing, and the game's bug-riddled environments allow for only the most repetitive missions, which usually involve collecting items or escaping from enemy bikers that are about as easy to outsmart as three-year-olds. —ANDY M.

TOTALLY SPIES!

RATING: 5.5

PLATFORM: GAME BOY ADVANCE
PUBLISHER: ATARI
DEVELOPER: MISTIC SOFTWARE
ESRB: EVERYONE

Beneath the blindingly pink box, flowery logo, and plots about beauty products and hunky teen idols, Totally Spies! aspires to be more than a mindless licensed cash-in geared toward girl gamers. What the game lacks in intensity it makes up for with a wide variety of play styles—including 2-D action-platforming, top-down driving, underwater shooting, rappelling (think Mission: Impossible), several types of timed button-pressing minigames, and more—plus it features some cool techniques, such as wall-spring jumps and swinging via grappling hook. Unfortunately, sluggish attacking and jumping controls hold back the side-view stages, and even though Totally Spies! is true to the license, fans may be disappointed that the game contains only five missions, none of which offer much of a challenge. —CHRIS H.



LET THE BIG DOG EAT

A SOLID HIT

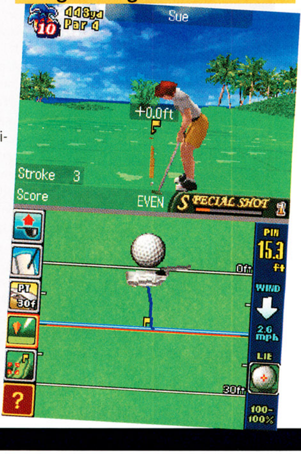
TRUE SWING GOLF

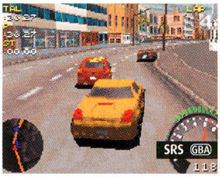
RATING: 8.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: T&E SOFT
ESRB: EVERYONE

Though Tiger Woods PGA Tour for the DS beat True Swing Golf to the touch-controlled punch, True Swing's refined mechanics make it worth the wait. Instead of having you trace a curved club path on the touch screen, as PGA Tour does, True Swing gives you direct overhead-view control over the club's head. You grab it with your stylus, pull back, then push forward to let it rip. If you swing fast and hit the ball square, it'll go a mile. Accuracy is intuitive, too. A line on the touch screen indicates how far you will have to pull the club back to execute a swing strong enough for the ball to reach its target. At times the game seems almost too easy, but you do have to concentrate and often employ strategy to score birdies consistently. Though the eight golfers are fairly generic and the 20 course variations are not based on actual links, the AI is well-tuned and the challenges are realistic. A top-screen 3-D view and a bottom-screen overhead angle give you all the information you need to get to each hole. Your accomplishments in the three-tiered championship earn you cash, which you can use to purchase stat-enhancing equipment—again generic, but useful. Limited single-card play for four players and a demo that you can upload to another player's DS add to the multitude of four-player multicard options. The experience of developer T&E Soft, which has been making golf games for Nintendo systems ever since 1991's True Golf Classics: Waialae Country Club for the Super NES, shows in the game's solid features and overall polish. —GEORGE S.

The grass is greener on the DS.





Just a bit longer.
Done
Pause
Help
TAMAGOTCHI DS

After I win, I'm gonna celebrate with grilled cheese sandwiches!
YU-GI-OH GBA
Deck

SRS: STREET RACING SYNDICATE

RATING: 5.5

PLATFORM: GAME BOY ADVANCE
PUBLISHER: DESTINATION SOFTWARE
DEVELOPER: ZOO DIGITAL PUBLISHING
ESRB: TEEN

You can fault Street Racing Syndicate for a lot of things, but a lack of ambition isn't one of them. The developers set out to cram as much of the game's underrated console predecessor as possible into the Game Boy Advance, but with mixed consequences. The 3-D graphics are among the best for the GBA, but at a huge detriment to the frame rate. (One note about the gameplay: the in-cockpit camera speeds up the frame rate considerably, vastly improving the overall handling of the vehicle.) The number and customizability of the cars is impressive, but the lack of brand licensing strips away a lot of the authentic street-racing experience. The balance of good and bad elements results in a well-produced but mediocre game. —CHRIS S.

YU-GI-OH! GX DUEL ACADEMY

RATING: 6.0

PLATFORM: GAME BOY ADVANCE
PUBLISHER: KONAMI
DEVELOPER: KONAMI
ESRB: EVERYONE

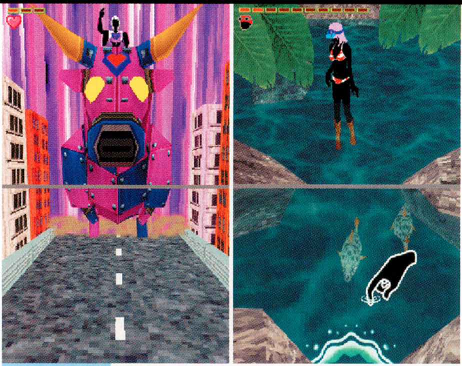
Yu-Gi-Oh! GX Duel Academy won't turn you into a Yu-Gi-Oh! card-game fan, but if you already belong to the brotherhood of the spiky-haired duelists, you'll enjoy the latest update to Konami's long-standing GBA franchise. Using characters and settings from the new Yu-Gi-Oh! GX television series, the game offers one duel after the next, interspersed with occasional duel exams. Success lets you move to new academy dorms and meet more duelists. Though the game does include a 50-lesson tutorial, duels are needlessly complex, as is the deck-building interface. You start with one prebuilt deck, but if you don't want to spend hours sifting through the 1,200 available cards, you'll wish the game included additional decks or an automatic deck-building option. AI-controlled opponents are suitably challenging, but still beatable with lots of practice. —GEORGE S.

TAMAGOTCHI CONNECTION: CORNER SHOP

RATING: 5.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: BANDAI
DEVELOPER: NANA-ONSHA
ESRB: EVERYONE

Those seeking a virtual pet for their DS should stick with Nintendo's lovable pooches for the time being. Unlike the original incarnation of Tamagotchi that took the world by storm in the late '90s, Tamagotchi Connection is more about entrepreneurship than taking care of a digital critter. You spend most of your time running an assortment of small corner shops (ranging from a bakery to a dental office) and earning money by completing elementary, touch-centric minigames. You can use those funds to buy food for your Tamagotchi or to gussy up its room, but that's the extent of your interaction with the little fella. Though the art style, from the folks who brought us Parappa the Rapper, is delightfully bizarre, the rest of the game is pretty bland, simplistic, and repetitive. —STEVE T.



RUB IS LOVE

INTO THE RABBIT HOLE

THE RUB RABBITS!

RATING: 8.0

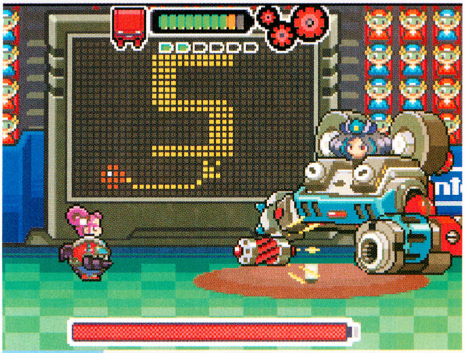
PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: SEGA
DEVELOPER: SONIC TEAM
ESRB: TEEN

Let's face it: the majority of today's games lack imagination. Many developers go to great lengths to re-create reality, but new ideas are becoming rarer and rarer as familiar characters are revived, stories are retold for the umpteenth time, and scenarios are recycled again and again. And then there's The Rub Rabbits! from developer Sonic Team. The bizarre title defies every notion of what a video game can be, and dares to go places that even its daring predecessor Feel the Magic: XY/XX didn't. And when you strip away the shock value in The Rub Rabbits!, you'll find a compelling story supported by beautiful visuals and a solid lineup of minigames.

Feel the Magic was by no means perfect. It suffered from a number of problems, most of which The Rub Rabbits! eradicates. TRR! not only looks and plays better than the original, but it has a more cohesive story that gives players an overall sense of accomplishment apart from conquering each minigame. Essentially, the story serves as the glue that holds the minigames together. Attempting to describe the plot in detail (which resembles an episode of *Dawson's Creek*, except with giant crabs, robotic love slaves, and memory-erasing poison) would prove disastrous, but its pacing and subtle nuances serve it well, making some sense of the game's wacky world.

TRR! pushes the boundaries with its gameplay, as well. Each new minigame has you doing something even more bizarre than the last. Some even use the touch screen in sensual ways: One exercise requires you to touch your girlfriend in the dark, and another has two players hold a single DS and cut a wedding cake in unison—when the cake splits in two a baby is revealed (explaining the game's Japanese title, Where Do Babies Come From?). Not every minigame will blow your mind, but each is fun and challenging in its own way. TRR!'s only fault is that it's far too short. There are unlockables, including an additional story, and Memory mode will keep you busy for a while, but the whole thing could have lasted a lot longer. Still, The Rub Rabbits! is appealing on many levels, and its most shocking moments are sure to raise a few eyebrows.
—ANDY M.

Touching is a little too good.



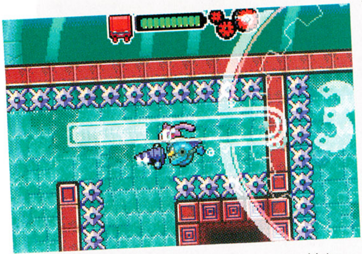
SCREW THIS

GET YOUR FREAK ON

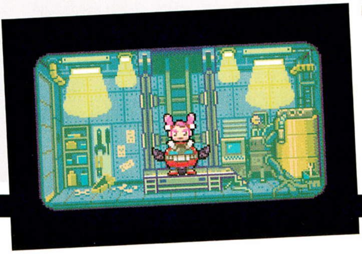
DRILL DOZER

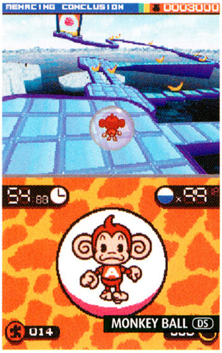
RATING: 9.0

PLATFORM: Game Boy Advance
PUBLISHER: Nintendo
DEVELOPER: Game Freak
ESRB: Everyone



Who said all the good video game ideas have already been done? Drill Dozer is out to prove them wrong. With inventive level design, a fun story, and a new cast of characters, the quirky Game Boy Advance title captivates your attention. You'll appreciate the game for its freshness, but the core gameplay mechanics are what make Drill Dozer a joy to play. The drill controls are rock-solid (pardon the pun), and it's incredible how many different ways the game implements the drill's functionality. The built-in rumble pack adds a subtle tactile dimension that works hand-in-hand brilliantly with the play controls. The level design is reminiscent of some of Treasure's or Sonic Team's better works—every nook and cranny is built with the drill's unique controls in mind. There's nothing flimsy about the game experience, either—six worlds, each with multiple levels, teem with creative platforming puzzles, original monsters, and entertaining bosses. And once you've completed the story, secrets hidden throughout the levels compel you to keep playing and discover them all. The one omission is a multiplayer aspect; Drill Dozer feels ripe for a head-to-head, obstacle-filled race mode or other competitive minigames. Regardless, Drill Dozer is one of the best platformers to hit the GBA in a long time, and definitely not one to miss. —Chris S.





MONKEY BALL (DS)

LAND BEFORE TIME (GBA)

PAINTBALL (DS)

SUPER MONKEY BALL: TOUCH & ROLL

RATING: 6.5

PLATFORM: Nintendo DS
PUBLISHER: Sega
DEVELOPER: Sega
ESRB: Everyone

We love us some Monkey Ball at Nintendo Power (the first Super Monkey Ball for GCN ranked #38 on our Top 200 list). Rolling those little primates around puzzle-esque stages and collecting bananas on your way to the finish line is as fun and addictive as it gets. But the broken controls in Super Monkey Ball: Touch & Roll really drag down the experience on the DS. Like others before it, Sega has tried and failed to re-create the functionality of an analog stick using the touch screen. The problem is that the touch screen doesn't offer resistance like an analog stick, and since the controls use the entire screen (you have to push all the way to the edge of the screen to move full speed in that direction), you lack the sort of quick precision required to navigate some of the tougher stages. You can use the digital control pad instead, but it's not much better. (I actually found myself switching back and forth between the two schemes depending on which stage I was playing.)

How about the multiplayer party games? Well, they're sort of a mixed bag. Unlike the main single-player mode, the action in all of them takes place on the bottom screen, and since they require touch control, your hand often obscures the view. It's especially problematic in Monkey Race, Monkey Fight, and the FPS-style Monkey Wars, all of which suffer from awkward control schemes as well. Monkey Bowling, Monkey Hockey, and Monkey Mini Golf fare much better and manage to offer a pretty good time.

Nevertheless, Touch & Roll feels like a missed opportunity, especially coming from one of the most creative teams in the business. Rather than shoehorn the current Monkey Ball experience onto the DS, it would have been nice if the developers had tried to reinvent it in a way that truly took advantage of the handheld's capabilities. —Steve T.

A SECOND OPINION

RATING: 7.5

Broken? It's true that the touch screen control does not work well in every game mode, but broken implies that it doesn't work at all, and that's just crazy-talk. In Story mode (which requires you to tilt the environment much like a toy labyrinth), I found using the stylus to be quite intuitive. That's not to say the game doesn't have any problems (the ability to adjust the stylus sensitivity and a more robust multiplayer mode would have been nice), but overall, it's a solid start to what will hopefully be a great new franchise for the DS. —Andy M.

ALSO THIS MONTH

Chomper's missing in the American Game Factory's **The Land Before Time: Into the Mysterious Beyond (GBA)** and the rest of the gang are out to find him. . . . Activision's **Greg Hastings' Tournament Paintball Max'd (DS)** teams paintball pros with hip-hop music. The opening B-Real music video is the first of its kind for the DS. . . . Paintball also gets its due in **Majesco's Sports Pack (GBA)**.

NINTENDO POWER

BACK ISSUES & PLAYER'S GUIDES

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GIANT POSTER INSIDE!
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PETER JACKSON'S KING KONG
TOUCH EVIL!

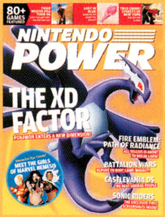
FEBRUARY 2006, VOLUME 200
Silence Is Deadly (Resident Evil: Deadly Silence), Inside Zelda, Money, Power, Fame (Animal Crossing: Wild World), Long Live the King (Peter Jackson's King Kong), Drawn to Nintendo, The Fast and the Furriest, NP Top 200: The Final 40, Sand Advice (Prince of Persia: The Two Thrones), Point/Counterpoint, Bond Is Back! (From Russia with Love), Fantasy Fulfilled (FINAL FANTASY IV Advance), Guilty Gear Dust Strikers, Naruto: Clash of Ninja, The Rub Rabbits!, Super Monkey Ball: Touch & Roll, Tales of Phantasia, Teen Titans, True Swing Golf

EVIL IN AMERICA!
NINTENDO POWER
nintendo Wi-Fi connection

JANUARY 2006, VOLUME 199
Behind the Scens: Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection, NP Top 200, Inside Zelda, Get a Real Life (Animal Crossing: Wild World), Driven to Succeed (Mario Kart DS), Scoreboard Soaring (Tony Hawk's American Sk8land), Final Frontier (FINAL FANTASY IV Advance), Pinball Wizards, Mini Games Mega Fun (Mario Party 7), How to Win the West (Gun), The Shroob Is Out There (Mario & Luigi: Partners in Time), Battles of Prince of Persia, Black and White Creatures, Brain Age: Train Your Brain in Minutes a Day, Chibi-Robo, Drill Dozer, Electroplankton, Sonic Riders, Super Princess Peach, Tamagotchi Connection: Corner Shop

THE POSSIBILITIES ARE MIND-BLOWING!
NINTENDO POWER
CLASS WARFARE
127 REASONS TO READ THIS ISSUE

DECEMBER 2005, VOLUME 198
Way of the Gun (Gun), On the War Path (Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance), Return to Babylon (Prince of Persia: The Two Thrones), Inside Zelda, NP Top 200, DS Bring It!, International Treasure, Mining Orre's Pokémon (Pokémon XD: Gale of Darkness), Bite the Big Apple (Ultimate Spider-Man), Tony Hawk's American Sk8land, Mega Man X Collection, From Russia with Love, Mario & Luigi: Partners in Time, Mario Party 7, Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire, Need for Speed: Most Wanted, The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, Dr. Mario and Puzzle League, NP 2005 Holiday Buyer's Guide

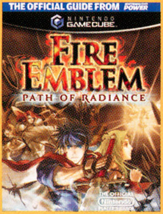

80+ GAMES FEATURED
NINTENDO POWER
THE XD FACTOR
FIRE EMBLEM: PATH OF RADIANCE
BATTALION WARS
CASTLEVANIA DS
SONIC RIDERS

NOVEMBER 2005, VOLUME 197
Out of the Shadows (Pokémon XD: Gale of Darkness), Fantastic Voyage (Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance), Inside Zelda, NP Top 200, The Bad Girls of Nemesis (Marvel Nemesis: Rise of the Imperfects), Army of One (Spartan: Total Warrior), Here Comes the Boom (Batallion Wars), Test Your Memory (Trace Memory), Dead of the Dawn (Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow), True Crime: New York City, Call of Duty 2: Big Red One, Viewtiful Joe: Double Trouble, Tony Hawk's American Wasteland, Viewtiful Joe: Red Hot Rumble, The Chronicles of Narnia, Super Mario Strikers, Donkey Kong Country 3, The Sims 2

70+ GAMES FEATURED
NINTENDO POWER
THE TOP 200 GAMES EVER!
JUNGLE LOVE
TONY HAWK DS
IT'S WAR!
PLAY WITH FIRE

OCTOBER 2005, VOLUME 196
Into the Fire (Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire), The Art of War (Spartan: Total Warrior), NP Top 200, Return of the King (King Kong), Inside Zelda, Land of the Lost (Lost in Blue), Trace Elements (Trace Memory), 2-D or Not 2-D, Hero Worship (Gunstar Super Heroes), Hulk's Bosses Need a Beating (The Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction), War-Torn? (Advance Wars: Dual Strike), Build the Ultimate Weapon (Sigma Star Saga), SSX on Tour, Battalion Wars, Ultimate Spider-Man, Tak: The Great Juju Challenge, X-Men Legends II: Rise of Apocalypse, Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney, New Puppy Magazine (Nintendogs)

OFFICIAL NINTENDO PLAYER'S GUIDES


THE OFFICIAL GUIDE FROM POWER
NINTENDO GAMECUBE
FIRE EMBLEM
PATH OF RADIANCE

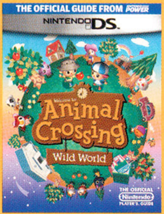
FIRE EMBLEM: PATH OF RADIANCE

THE OFFICIAL GUIDE FROM POWER
NINTENDO GAMECUBE
Pokémon XD
Gale of Darkness

POKéMON XD: GALE OF DARKNESS

THE OFFICIAL GUIDE FROM POWER
NINTENDO DS
MARIO & LUIGI
PARTNERS IN TIME

MARIO & LUIGI: PARTNERS IN TIME


THE OFFICIAL GUIDE FROM POWER
NINTENDO DS
Animal Crossing
Wild World

ANIMAL CROSSING: WILD WORLD

THE OFFICIAL GUIDE FROM POWER
GAME BOY ADVANCE
FINAL FANTASY IV
ADVANCE

FINAL FANTASY IV ADVANCE

NINTENDO GAMECUBE

- BATTALION WARS
- FINAL FANTASY: CRYSTAL CHRONICLES
- THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: FOUR SWORDS ADVENTURES
- METROID PRIME 2 ECHOES
- PAPER MARIO: THE THOUSAND-YEAR DOOR
- PIKMIN 2
- POKéMON COLOSSEUM
- STAR FOX: ASSAULT

NINTENDO DS AND GAME BOY ADVANCE

- ADVANCE WARS: DUAL STRIKE (DS)
- FINAL FANTASY I & II: DAWN OF SOULS (GBA)
- FIRE EMBLEM: THE SACRED STONES (GBA)
- THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: THE MINISH CAP (GBA)
- MARIO & LUIGI: SUPERSTAR SAGA (GBA)
- METROID: ZERO MISSION (GBA)
- POKéMON EMERALD (GBA)
- POKéMON FIRERED & LEAFGREEN (GBA)
- SWORD OF MANA (GBA)

Nintendo Power issues are available individually. Features in each issue are listed above. Use the Back Issue/Player's Guide Order Form in this issue to order past Nintendo Power issues and Player's Guides, call 1-800-255-3700 to order by phone, or visit store.nintendo.com to order online with VISA or MasterCard. Offer valid while supplies last! Please allow up to 2 weeks for delivery. Prices include shipping and handling. Prices subject to change without notice.

[ARCHIVE]

HOLIDAY CHEERS

The last three months of the year always bring great titles. So what holiday 2005 releases rose to the top with our reviewers? Four rated a 9.5: Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance, Gunstar Super Heroes, Metroid Prime Pinball, and Animal Crossing: Wild World. Nine others scored a 9.0, the most recent of the bunch being Peter Jackson's King Kong (GCN), Prince of Persia: The Two Thrones, and FINAL FANTASY IV Advance. Check out the NP Award nominations (page 68) for all of the year's best games.

SCORES REFLECT INDIVIDUAL REVIEWERS' OPINIONS.

NINTENDO GAMECUBE

TITLE	SCORE	PUBLISHER	VOL.	ESRB
Batman Begins	6.5	Electronic Arts	194	T
Battalion Wars	8.5	Nintendo	197	T
Bratz: Rock Angelz	N/A	THQ	198	E
Cabela's Dangerous Hunts 2	2.5	Activision	200	T
Cabela's Outdoor Adventures	6.5	Activision	198	T
Call of Duty 2: Big Red One	7.5	Activision	200	T
Chaos Field	6.0	O~3	200	E
Charlie and the Chocolate Factory	2.5	Global Star	195	E
Chicken Little	6.0	Buena Vista	198	E10+
The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe	5.5	Buena Vista	199	T
Crash Tag Team Racing	7.0	VU Games	198	E10+
Dance Dance Revolution: Mario Mix	7.5	Nintendo	198	E
Digimon World 4	7.0	Bandai	193	E
Dora the Explorer: Journey to the Purple Planet	N/A	Global Star	198	EC
Fantastic Four	6.0	Activision	194	T
FIFA Soccer 06	9.0	Electronic Arts	197	E
Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance	9.5	Nintendo	197	T
Frogger: Ancient Shadow	5.5	Konami	197	E
From Russia with Love	7.0	Electronic Arts	199	T
Geist	5.0	Nintendo	196	M
Gun	8.25	Activision	199	M
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire	8.5	Electronic Arts	199	E10+
Harvest Moon: Another Wonderful Life	7.5	Natsume	195	E
Hello Kitty: Roller Rescue	5.0	Namco	196	E
The Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction	8.5	VU Games	196	T
The Incredibles: Rise of the Underminer	7.5	THQ	198	E10+
International Golf and Tennis	3.0	Ignition	193	E
Karaoke Revolution Party	8.0	Konami	199	E10+
Kids Next Door: Operation V.I.D.E.O.G.A.M.E.	N/A	Global Star	198	E10+
Killer 7	8.5	Capcom	193	M
Knights of the Temple	5.0	Aspyr	194	M
Lego *Star Wars*	6.5	Eidos	198	E
Madagascar	6.0	Activision	194	E10+
Madden NFL 06	9.0	Electronic Arts	195	E
Mario Party 7	7.5	Nintendo	199	E
Mario Superstar Baseball	9.0	Nintendo	196	E
Mark Davis: Pro Bass Challenge	5.0	Natsume	198	E
Marvel Nemesis: Rise of the Imperfects	7.0	Electronic Arts	197	T
Medal of Honor: European Assault	8.0	Electronic Arts	194	T
Mega Man X Collection	8.5	Capcom	200	E
Midway Arcade Treasures 3	6.5	Midway	197	E
Namco 50th Anniversary Arcade Collection	7.0	Namco	197	E10+
NBA Live 06	5.5	Electronic Arts	198	E
Need for Speed: Most Wanted	8.0	Electronic Arts	199	T
NHL 06	8.5	Electronic Arts	198	E10+
Nicktoons: Nicktoons Unite!	N/A	THQ	198	E
One Piece: Grand Battle	6.5	Bandai	197	T
Pac-Man World 3	7.0	Namco	199	E
Peter Jackson's King Kong	9.0	Ubisoft	200	T
Pokémon XD: Gale of Darkness	8.5	Nintendo	197	E
Prince of Persia: The Two Thrones	9.0	Ubisoft	200	M
Scooby-Doo!: Unmasked	7.5	THQ	197	E
Shadow the Hedgehog	8.0	Sega	199	E10+
Shrek Superslam	N/A	Activision	199	E10+
The Sims 2	8.5	Electronic Arts	199	T
Sonic Gems Collection	8.5	Sega	195	E
Spartan: Total Warrior	8.5	Sega	197	M
SSX On Tour	8.0	Electronic Arts	198	E10+
Super Mario Strikers	7.5	Nintendo	199	E
Tak: The Great Juju Challenge	8.5	THQ	197	E
Teenage Mutant Ninja turtles 3: Mutant Nightmare	4.0	Konami	199	E10+
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 06	9.0	Electronic Arts	197	E
Tony Hawk's American Wasteland	9.0	Activision	198	T
True Crime: New York City	8.0	Activision	199	M
Ty the Tasmanian Tiger: Night of the Quinkan	6.0	Activision	198	E10+
Ultimate Spider-Man	9.0	Activision	198	T
Viewtiful Joe: Red Hot Rumble	6.5	Capcom	199	T
World Series of Poker	4.5	Activision	198	E10+
WWE: Day of Reckoning 2	8.0	THQ	197	T
X-Men Legends II: Rise of Apocalypse	7.5	Activision	198	T
Zatch Bell!: Mamodo Battles	6.0	Bandai	198	T

NINTENDO DS

TITLE	SCORE	PUBLISHER	VOL.	ESRB
Advance Wars: Dual Strike	9.5	Nintendo	196	E
Animal Crossing: Wild World	9.0	Nintendo	199	E
Battles of Prince of Persia	6.5	Ubisoft	200	E10+
Bomberman	7.0	Ubisoft	194	E
Burnout Legends	N/A	Electronic Arts	199	E
Bust-a-Move DS	7.5	Majesco	200	E
Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow	9.0	Konami	197	T
The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe	7.0	Buena Vista	199	E10+
Dig Dug Digging Strike	7.0	Namco	198	E
Dragon Ball z: Supersonic Warriors 2	5.0	Atari	199	E10+
Dragon Booster	6.0	Konami	200	E
Electroplankton	8.5	Nintendo	200	E
Elf Bowling 1 & 2	N/A	Ignition	200	T
FIFA Soccer 06	8.0	Electronic Arts	198	E
Frogger: Helmet Chaos	5.0	Konami	196	E
Ford Racing 3	N/A	Destination	198	E
Franklin's Great Adventures	N/A	American Game Factory	200	E
Frogger: Helmet Chaos	5.0	Konami	196	E
GoldenEye: Rogue Agent	6.0	Electronic Arts	195	T
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire	8.0	Electronic Arts	199	E
The Incredibles: Rise of the Underminer	5.5	THQ	199	E10+
Kim Possible: Kimmunicator	6.0	Buena Vista	198	E
Kirby: Canvas Curse	9.0	Nintendo	194	E
Lost in Blue	8.0	Konami	197	E10+
Lunar: Dragon Song	7.0	Ubisoft	197	E10+
Madagascar	7.0	Activision	194	E
Madden NFL 06	8.0	Electronic Arts	196	E
Mario Kart DS	9.0	Nintendo	199	E
Mario & Luigi: Partners in Time	9.0	Nintendo	199	E
Marvel Nemesis: Rise of the Imperfects	5.0	Electronic Arts	198	E10+
Mega Man Battle Network 5: Double Team DS	7.0	Capcom	198	E
Meteos	9.0	Nintendo	194	E
Metroid Prime Pinball	9.5	Nintendo	198	E
Monopoly/Boggle/Battleship	N/A	Atari	200	E
Nanostray	8.0	Majesco	195	E
Need for Speed: Most Wanted	6.0	Electronic Arts	199	E
Nicktoons: Nicktoons Unite!	N/A	THQ	198	E
Nintendogs	8.5	Nintendo	196	E
Pac-Man World 3	3.0	Namco	200	E
Pac 'N Roll	7.5	Namco	196	E
Peter Jackson's King Kong	3.5	Ubisoft	200	T
Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney	8.0	Capcom	197	T
Puyo Pop Fever	6.0	Atlus	193	E

REVIEWER NOTES

PRINCE OF PERSIA: THE TWO THRONES

Though many of you may feel Prince of Persia-ed out after The Sands of Time and Warrior Within, don't write The Two Thrones off too quickly. The solid level design, awesome storyline and new gameplay elements (including the oh-so-satisfying speed kills) in The Two Thrones will keep the experience fresh, no matter how much Prince of Persia you've played. The Two Thrones is one of the best titles to hit the GCN this year.

—Andy M.

>PETER JACKSON'S KING KONG

Not since GoldenEye 007 has there been such a fully realized movie adaptation as the console Kong. It's fitting that both titles move the FPS genre into new directions. Kong does so with its sense of tension and its immersive play.

—George S.

NEED FOR SPEED: MOST WANTED

It appears that the street-racing theme has died down quite a bit recently, but that hasn't slowed the Need for Speed series. Most Wanted maintains the NFS tradition of solid driving mechanics and realistic level design, and smoothly combines the old cop-chasing days with the more Underground-style flashy vehicles. The performance upgrades are a little weak—it would've been nice to get to tinker a little more than you can—but that drawback hardly detracts from the overall experience. —Chris S.

>FIRE EMBLEM: PATH OF RADIANCE

The GCN debut of Nintendo's GBA series is no less than a fantasy-tactics masterpiece, its storyline the most fascinating of 2005. The missions are fiendishly tough, and the game's length means a wonderfully long haul.

—Steven G.

TITLE	SCORE	PUBLISHER	VOL.	ESRB
Real Time Conflict: Shogun Empires	7.0	Namco	198	E10+
SBK: Snowboard Kids	7.5	Atlus	199	E
Sega Casino	6.0	Sega	199	T
Shrek Superslam	N/A	Activision	199	E10+
The Sims 2	5.5	Electronic Arts	199	E10+
Snood 2: On Vacation	N/A	Destination	199	E
Sonic Rush	9.0	Sega	199	E
Space Invaders Revolution	4.0	Mastiff	196	E
SpongeBob SquarePants: The Yellow Avenger	3.5	THQ	198	E
Spyro: Shadow Legacy	6.5	VU Games	198	E
Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith	8.0	Ubisoft	193	E10+
Tak: The Great Juju Challenge	7.5	THQ	197	E
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 3: Mutant Nightmare	6.0	Konami	198	E
Texas Hold 'Em Poker DS	5.0	Majesco	198	E
Texas Hold 'Em Poker Pack	N/A	Summitsoft	200	E
Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six: Lockdown	6.0	Ubisoft	197	M
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Chaos Theory	8.0	Ubisoft	194	T
Tony Hawk's American Sk8land	8.0	Activision	199	E
Top Spin 2	6.0	2K Games	200	E
Trace Memory	8.5	Nintendo	197	T
Trauma Center: Under the Knife	9.0	Atlus	198	T
Ultimate Spider-Man	6.5	Activision	198	E10+
Viewtiful Joe: Double Trouble	7.0	Capcom	198	T
Whac-A-Mole	N/A	Activision Value	197	E
Yu-Gi-Oh!: Nightmare Troubadour	8.0	Konami	196	E
Zoo Tycoon DS	7.5	THQ	197	E
GAME BOY ADVANCE				
Atomic Betty	N/A	Namco	198	E
ATV Quad Frenzy	N/A	Majesco	199	E
Backyard Football 2006	N/A	Atari	197	E
Backyard Skateboarding	N/A	Atari	198	E
Barbie and the Magic of Pegasus	N/A	VU Games	197	E
Batman Begins	5.5	Electronic Arts	194	T
The Berenstain Bears and the Spooky Old Tree	N/A	Namco	197	E
The Bible Game	N/A	Crave	197	E
Big Mutha Truckers	N/A	Destination	199	E10+
Bionicle: Maze of Shadows	N/A	THQ	198	E
Board Game Classics	N/A	Destination	197	E
Bratz: Rock Angelz	N/A	THQ	198	E
Candy Land/Chutes & Ladders/Memory	N/A	Destination	200	E
Care Bears: Care Quest	N/A	American Game Factory	200	EC
Centipede Compilation	5.0	Destination	197	E
Charlie and the Chocolate Factory	3.5	Global Star	195	E
Chicken Little	N/A	Buena Vista	198	E
Chicken Shoot	N/A	Destination	198	E10+
The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe	N/A	Buena Vista	199	E
Connect Four Compilation	5.0	Destination	197	E
Danny Phantom: The Ultimate Enemy	N/A	THQ	197	E
Disney's Magical Quest 3 Starring Mickey & Donald	5.5	Capcom	194	E
DK: King of Swing	8.0	Nintendo	197	E
Dogz	N/A	Ubisoft	199	E
Donkey Kong Country 3	8.0	Nintendo	198	E
Dr. Mario & Puzzle League	7.0	Nintendo	199	E
Dragon Ball GT: Transformation	5.5	Atari	196	E10+
Driv3r	5.5	Atari	198	T
Duel Masters: Shadow of the Code	5.5	Atari	198	E
Dynasty Warriors Advance	7.0	Nintendo	196	E10+
Elf Bowling 1 & 2	N/A	Ignition	200	T
everGirl	N/A	THQ	198	E
The Fairly OddParents!: Clash with the Anti-World	N/A	THQ	199	E
Fantastic Four	6.5	Activision	194	E10+
FIFA Soccer 06	7.0	Electronic Arts	198	E
Final Fantasy IV Advance	9.0	Nintendo	200	E10+
Fire Emblem: The Sacred Stones	9.0	Nintendo	193	E
Ford Racing 3	N/A	Destination	198	E
Franklin the Turtle	N/A	American Game Factory	200	EC
The Game of Life/Yahtzee/Payday	N/A	Destination	200	E
Garfield: The Search for Pooky	N/A	American Game Factory	200	E
Gauntlet Compilation	6.5	Destination	197	E
Greg Hastings' Tournament Paintball Max'd	N/A	Activision	200	E10+
Gumby vs. the Astrobots	5.0	Namco	196	E
Gunstar Super Heroes	9.5	Sega	198	E10+
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire	8.0	Electronic Arts	199	E
Harvest Moon: More Friends of Mineral Town	8.5	Natsume	195	E
Hello Kitty: Happy Party Pals	N/A	THQ	199	E
Herbie: Fully Loaded	5.5	Disney Interactive	194	E
Hi Hi Puffy AmiYumi: Kaznapped!	6.5	D3	199	E
The Incredibles: Rise of the Underminer	N/A	THQ	199	E
James Pond Codename Robocod	4.0	Valcon Games	195	E
Juka and the Monophonic Menace	5.0	Orbital Media	196	E
Kim Possible III: Team Possible	6.5	Disney Interactive	195	E
KLAX Compilation	4.0	Destination	197	E
Koala Brothers: Outback Adventures	N/A	American Game Factory	200	EC
Kong: King of Atlantis	N/A	Majesco	200	E
Kong: The 8th Wonder of the World	6.0	Ubisoft	200	E10+
Lizzie McGuire 3	N/A	Buena Vista	197	E
Madagascar	7.0	Activision	194	E
Madagascar: Operation Penguin	N/A	Activision	199	E
Madden NFL 06	7.0	Electronic Arts	196	E
Mario Tennis: Power Tour	7.0	Nintendo	199	E
Mega Man Battle Network 5: Team Colonel & Team Protoman	6.5	Capcom	194	E
Mega Man Zero 4	8.5	Capcom	198	E
Millipede Compilation	5.0	Destination	197	E
Mr. Driller 2	5.0	Namco	193	E
Namco Museum 50th Anniversary Arcade Collection	5.5	Namco	197	E
Need for Speed: Most Wanted	N/A	Electronic Arts	199	E
Nicktoons: Nicktoons Unite!	N/A	THQ	198	E
The Nightmare Before Christmas: The Pumpkin King	6.5	Buena Vista	198	E10+
One Piece	8.0	Bandai	197	E10+
Operation/Mouse Trap/Simon	N/A	Destination	200	E
Pac-Man Pinball Advance	7.0	Namco	193	E
Pac-Man World 2	6.0	Destination	197	E
Paperboy Compilation	5.5	Destination	197	E
Pocket Dogs	N/A	0~3	200	E
Pong Compilation	5.5	Destination	197	E
Popeye: Rush for Spinach	5.0	Namco	193	E
Power Rangers: S.P.D.	4.0	THQ	196	E10+
The Proud Family	N/A	Buena Vista	199	E
Rebelstar: Tactical Command	7.0	Namco	197	E10+
Rec Room Challenge	N/A	Majesco	200	E
Risk Compilation	7.0	Destination	197	E
Riviera: The Promised Land	6.5	Atlus	194	T
Scrabble Blast	7.5	Destination	193	E
Scrabble Jr. Compilation	4.5	Destination	197	E
Shaman King: Master of Spirits 2	6.5	Konami	196	E 10+
Shrek Superslam	N/A	Activision	199	E10+
Sigma Star Saga	8.5	Namco	195	E10+
The Sims 2	7.5	Electronic Arts	199	E10+
Sky Dancers	N/A	Crave	199	E
Snood 2: On Vacation	N/A	Destination	199	E
Spy Hunter Compilation	4.5	Destination	197	E
Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith	7.0	Ubisoft	193	E10+
Tak: The Great Juju Challenge	4.0	THQ	197	E
Teen Titans	6.0	Majesco	198	E10+
Tony Hawk's American Sk8land	6.0	Activision	199	E
Top Spin 2	N/A	2K Games	200	E
Tokyo Xtreme Racer Advance	3.5	Crave	193	E
Tringo	N/A	Crave	200	E
Trollz: Hair Affair	N/A	Ubisoft	199	E
Ultimate Arcade Games	N/A	Telegames	198	E
Ultimate Spider-Man	6.0	Activision	198	E10+
WarioWare: Twisted!	8.5	Nintendo	193	E
W.I.T.C.H.	N/A	Buena Vista	197	E
Yoshi Topsy-Turvy	7.0	Nintendo	194	E
Zatch Bell!: Electric Arena	N/A	Bandai	198	E10+
Zooo	4.5	Ignition	196	E

>DRAGON BOOSTER

With all kinds of crazy action going on at once, I found Dragon Booster nearly impossible to play with just two hands. All you three-handed people out there, this game's for you. —Chris S.

LUNAR: DRAGON SONG

As much as I love the Lunar RPG series, I have to admit that the charm and good looks of Dragon Song don't make up for its infuriating battle system or the missed opportunity to truly tap into the rich history of the Lunar world. I can only hope that Game Arts takes players' criticisms to heart and spends the time necessary to make the next Lunar game worthy of the name. —Chris H.

>SHADOW THE HEDGEHOG

Despite what you may have heard elsewhere, Shadow's solo debut is good fun, especially on the GameCube. If you dig the 3-D Sonics, you'll enjoy this new take on the hedgehog formula. —Steve T.

ELECTROPLANKTON

Splice the DNA from Nintendogs and Animal Crossing: Wild World, and you'll get Electroplankton, a trippy mutation that's half tactile life sim, half music-creation software. The DS title is so madly genius that it may baffle those who like game staples such as goals, storyline, and saving, but it'll be completely mesmerizing for those who just want to mess around, musically speaking, with instant gratification and zero commitment. —Steven G.

MUSIC

MEGA MANIACS

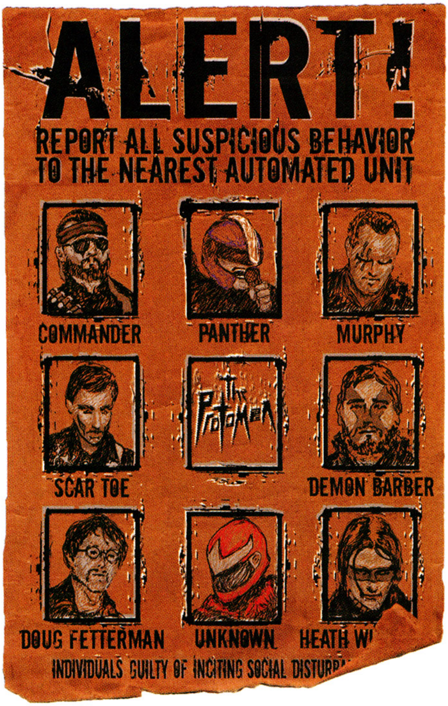
The Protomen dish out power chords and justice in a monumental Mega Man-themed rock opera.

Who are The Protomen? If you ask their leader (who goes by the title Commander), he'll say, "We must tell the story that we were commissioned to tell while reflecting the absolute and pure fury inherent in the music that accompanied us on our journeys through and our training in the world of Capcom's Mega Man."

Translation: The Protomen are a band that writes songs about Mega Man. But don't confuse them with NES cover bands such as The Advantage! and Minibosses (both of which we've covered in previous issues). The band's debut album—an intricate rock opera devoted to the blue-clad hero—proves beyond a doubt that they are in a league of their own. The band was kind enough to send us a copy of the CD, which takes listeners through a conceptual musical story similar in structure to The Who's *Tommy* or Green Day's *American Idiot*, but revolving around Mega Man, Proto Man, Dr. Wily, and Dr. Light. Rather than simply retelling the simplistic story told in the games, The Protomen have let their imaginations run wild with scenarios and plot points. As Commander put it, "It was not so much the actual story in the games that inspired us. It was more what the story could be and isn't. It was the idea of what Wily wanted and never achieved in the game—for the world to cower at his feet and to be controlled by his army of evil robots."

The Protomen tell their story through eight wildly different songs ranging from "Unrest in the House of Light" (which has a country-western feel), to the anthemic and catchy rock tune "The Will of One." Though all the music is original, a few of the melodies are so reminiscent of in-game Mega Man music that I found myself scouring through Mega Man games as I listened to the album, just to see if I could pinpoint any specific references. My search came up empty, as The Protomen are not a cover band. They are just a band that finds Mega Man to be an inspiring enough subject to devote an entire album to. For hard-core Mega Man fans, The Protomen are must-listen material. For the rest, they are a band doing what all bands should be doing: writing about things they care about. (More information on The Protomen can be found on their website, www.protomen.com.)

—Andy M.


ALERT!
REPORT ALL SUSPICIOUS BEHAVIOR
TO THE NEAREST AUTOMATED UNIT
COMMANDER
PANTHER
MURPHY
SCAR TOE
The Protomen
DEMON BARBER
DOUG FETTERMAN
UNKNOWN
HEATH W
INDIVIDUALS GUILTY OF INCITING SOCIAL DISTURB

> **"It was not so much the actual story in the games that inspired us. It was more what the story could be and isn't."**
>
> —Commander (The Protomen)

The Protomen
The Protomen
The Protomen

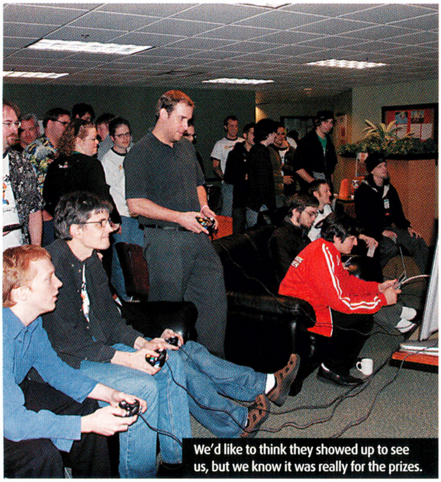
The Protomen's debut album comes in a hand-made silk-screened CD jacket, complete with a printed booklet displaying the story and lyrics.

EVENTS

WE'RE HAVIN' A PARTY

NINTENDO POWER CELEBRATES 200 ISSUES!

When Nintendo Power announced we were having a company party to celebrate our 200th issue, the reaction was a mix between, "Isn't that what became of Fun Club News?" and "Ooh! Free cake!" But no matter their reasons for coming, plenty of people showed up to make our lunchtime shindig a big success. Events included video game face-offs between NP staffers and the rest of the NOA folk (we got to choose the games, of course). Writer Steve Thomason was particularly impressive in his 3-2 comeback victory in NES Ice Hockey against Localization writer Erik Peterson. We also held a Play-Doh design contest to re-create the classic Mario cover from our very first issue. Some may have questioned our integrity when all of the best entries were from our own talented magazine-design team, but hey—it's our contest; we made the rules. And just to prove we don't know as much as we think we do, we hosted a live game show where other NOA employees showed off more NP knowledge than we could ever hope to attain. We'd like to give a huge thanks to Nintendo of America for the many years of support, but mostly thank yous to all of our readers who continue to enjoy Nintendo Power!
—CHRIS S.



We'd like to think they showed up to see us, but we know it was really for the prizes.

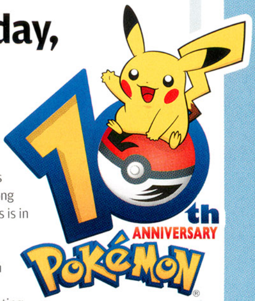
WI-FI

Fast Food, Faster Karts

Nintendo of America's executive vice president of sales and marketing, Reggie Fils-Aime, visited Bellevue Square mall McDonald's near NOA's Redmond, Washington, headquarters on December 19th to promote Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection's availability at more than 6,000 McDonald's restaurants. Though Reggie could have spent all day answering fans' questions and signing autographs, he had official business to attend to: a championship race against fellow Mario Kart DS enthusiasts on the Shroom Ridge course. The winner, Chris Furmanczyk, took home a Nintendo DS signed by the Regginator himself. Reggie said of his defeat, "I'm obviously working too hard and not racing nearly enough." —GEORGE S.

POKéMON

Happy Birthday, Pokémon!



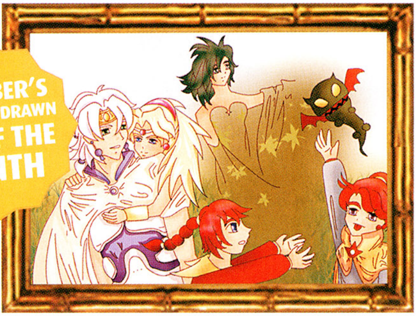
In 1996, Pokémon Red and Green were released in Japan, launching one of the most popular video game and entertainment franchises in history. That means that 2006 marks Pokémon's 10th anniversary! To celebrate, a year-long birthday party with many exciting events is in store. A mall tour featuring games, activities, and special giveaways will visit over 20 cities across the country. In addition, video game qualifier tournaments will be held at each stop, culminating this summer in the Pokémon National Video Game Championships! Watch for the release of limited-edition products, as well. Be sure to keep checking www.pokemon.com for all the latest Pokémon 10th anniversary information including mall tour details and how to enter the Pokémon video game qualifier near you. —CHRIS S.

ONLINE

FANTASTIC!

The characters from FINAL FANTASY IV Advance inspired a vast range of designs from our artists. Congrats to online virtuoso Crystalfairy12, our first repeat fan–art contest winner!

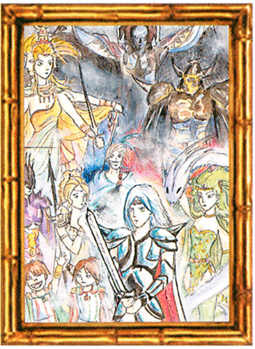
DECEMBER'S COMPUTER-DRAWN ART OF THE MONTH



ARTIST:
CRYSTALFAIRY12

SUBJECT:
FINAL FANTASY IV ADVANCE

DECEMBER'S HAND-DRAWN ART OF THE MONTH

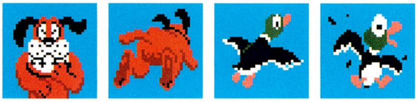


ARTIST:
MARIMBAMONKEY14

SUBJECT:
FINAL FANTASY IV ADVANCE

Looking to submit art for the first time, and not sure what to do? Visit **forums.nintendo.com** for details. Be sure to read the rules before you post your masterpieces.

Custom-Made Avatars **By Cory Conner**



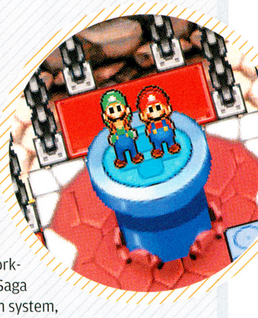
Sage Reviews

Disagree with one of our recent reviews? Write your own and tell us what you think we overlooked.

Sage Review of the Month

Mario & Luigi: Partners in Time

reviewed by
Zen-Frog



This sequel to Mario & Luigi: Superstar Saga delivers an updated, engaging Mario RPG experience to the Nintendo DS. When Mario and Luigi travel through time and meet their younger selves, the result is an entertaining, high-impact thumb workout. The Bros. Attacks of Superstar Saga have given way to a challenging item system, featuring a variety of items from past Mario games. Using these items successfully will truly test your gaming ability.

Although Partners in Time includes a bit less schtick than Superstar Saga, the game still has many funny moments, with the additional "aww" factor of Babies Mario and Luigi. The game makes nice, albeit limited, use of the double-tall screen to add map data and provide extra challenge during battles. Sometimes the babies need to go off on their own via the top screen to solve puzzles and open new areas for the quartet to explore. While this creates a nice tension as the weaker, less able babies fit into tight spots where their older selves can't go, after the first few levels in the game, you've seen almost every truly new puzzle the game has to offer.

While Partners in Time neither takes full graphical advantage of the DS nor delivers quite the humor of its predecessor, it still showcases a unique concept done well.

Excerpts from Other Sage Reviews

Donkey Kong Country 3
"DKC 3 has new additions in the GBA version, not the least of which is an entire new world to explore, with several new levels which don't feel half-baked or tacked on."—MARIO

Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance
"The battle animations can be repetitive and some take a longer amount of time than others. But the variety of weapons, skills and appearances prevent absolute boredom while keeping tension high."—MIKAZUKINOYAIBA

What's a Sage?
Sages are members of the NSider online community that are put through the wringer and hand-picked by Nintendo. They get tons of special privileges, including opportunities to review games for Nintendo Power magazine.

Soapbox time!
The NP award nominations are out, and with games like Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow, Resident Evil 4, and Donkey Kong Jungle Beat out there, the competition's gonna be tough. Send in a 50-word essay on why you think your underdog title should be game of the year. We'll run the best in an upcoming issue.

community@nintendopower.com
pokemon_community@nintendopower.com

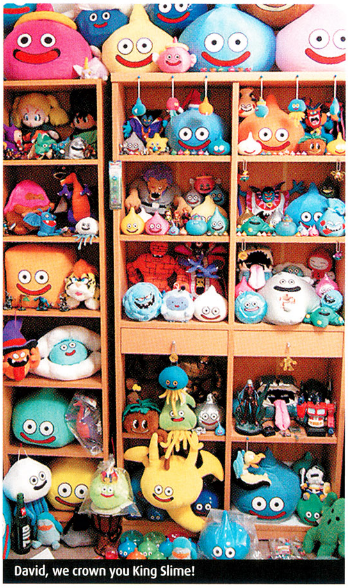
COLLECTING

Monster Collection

Obsessed superfan David D. shows off enough Dragon Quest swag to sink a small ship.

We've always had an affinity for Dragon Quest around these parts. Whether that's because we gave a free copy of the original game (known as Dragon Warrior in the US) to new subscribers way back in the day, or because our managing editor, Scott Pelland, wrote the English text for the game, or because former NP staff writer Alan Averill was actually a Slime—it's hard to say. But one thing's for sure: the Dragon Quest franchise has a rabid following. And none prove that more than David D. and his massive Dragon Quest collection.

David has by far the largest assortment of Dragon Quest paraphernalia we've ever laid eyes on (only part of which is shown here). He not only owns the Goldman and Metal Slime figurines that we showed off in Volume 199's Swag article; he owns a wall-mounted Mirror of Ra, two metal letter openers depicting Loto's Sword and the Celestial Sword, a near complete collection of English and Japanese games, a ton of carded Dragon Quest figurines, and much, much more. If you've got your own game-related collection, e-mail us pictures—we may include them in a future issue. —Andy M.



David, we crown you King Slime!

SUPER MARIO 64
DONKEY KONGA 2
FINAL FANTASY
DRAGON WARRIOR
DRAGON WARRIOR
DRAGON WARRIOR II
DRAGON WARRIOR III
DRAGON WARRIOR IV
SUPER Famicom
SUPER Famicom
STAR OCEAN

David's been a fan since the original Dragon Warrior.

These Dragon Quest bottle caps were released only in Japan.

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GAME OVER

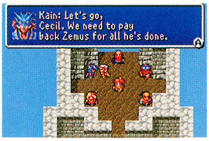
FINAL FANTASY IV ADVANCE

K.O. THE FINAL BOSS!

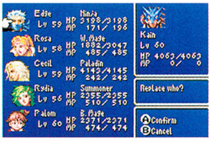
Last month our **FINAL FANTASY IV ADVANCE** coverage guided you through every boss battle in the game except the final one: Zeromus. This month we're bringing you a full page of strategy devoted to the notorious fight.

It's Party Time!

Before tackling Lunar Subterrane (where you'll face Zeromus), return to the overworld and visit the Manor of Prayers in Mysidia. Palom, Porom, Yang, Edward, and Cid will be waiting—you can sub in each character for one of your current party members (though Cecil must remain in the party). Once you've selected a party lineup, head to Mt. Ordeals and use the newly available Cave of Trials to earn experience and one-of-a-kind weapons for your new recruits.



Kain: Let's go, Cecil. We need to pay back Zemus for all he's done.

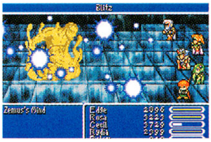


Edge Lv 59 Ninja HP 3198/3198 MP 171/196
Rosa Lv 58 W.Mage HP 1882/3047 MP 485/485
Cecil Lv 59 Paladin HP 4143/4145 MP 242/242
Rydia Lv 56 Summoner HP 2355/2355 MP 510/510
Palom Lv 60 B.Mage HP 2371/2371 MP 474/474
Kain Lv 60 HP 4063/4063 MP 0/0
Replace who?
Ⓐ Confirm
Ⓑ Cancel

Four of the five slots in your party are up for grabs before the final fight. An ideal party includes at least one healer and one black-magic user.

Prepare for the Worst

Each of your party members should be at around level 50 before you attempt the final boss's lair, Lunar Subterrane. The dungeon is an enormous maze—bring along plenty of Cottages, and as many Dry Ethers and Hi-Potions as you can afford. (Purchase them at the Hummingway Home on the moon.)



Blitz
Zemus's Mind
Edge 2896
Rosa 3223
Cecil 3729
Rydia 2399

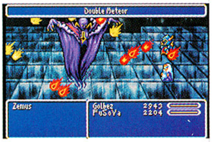
Encountering the inhabitants of Lunar Subterrane in battle (especially the five optional bosses) will earn your party a ton of vital experience.

SPOILER ALERT!

The Final Fight

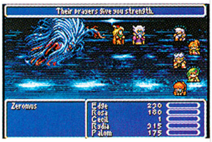
You will likely die the first time you face Zeromus—it is significantly more difficult than any other boss in the game. The best way to win is to step into the battle prepared. On level B7 of Lunar Subterrane, use a Cottage and save your game—this is the last resting point before you'll face Zeromus. Continue on your quest until you cross the bridge on level B12—where you'll encounter Zemus fighting FuSoYa and Golbez. After a lengthy story sequence, your party will be thrown into battle with the mutated beast, Zeromus.

You'll have a round or two before Zeromus attacks your party—use the time to cast Shell and Haste on your party members. Once Cecil uses the crystal, Zeromus will begin pummeling your party mercilessly. Attack with everything you've got—cast your strongest spells (such as Meteor) and summons (such as Bahamut) on the boss. To counter Zeromus's Big Bang attack (which will likely kill a few of your party members), have your attackers use Phoenix Downs to revive fallen allies while your healer casts Curaja on the entire party every turn. Once you find an attack-and-heal rhythm, stay in it—before you know it, Zeromus will be dead and the world will be safe once again.



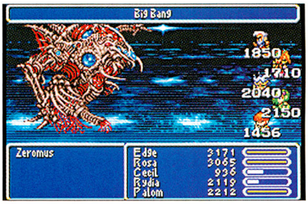
Double Meteor
Zemus
Golbez 2943
FuSoYa 2204

In his original form, Zemus will defeat FuSoYa and Golbez in battle.



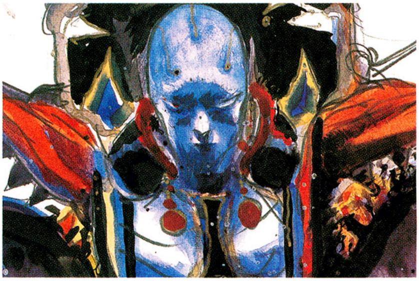
Their prayers give you strength.
Zeromus
Edge 230
Rosa 180
Cecil 1
Rydia 315
Palom 175

At the start of the final battle, your party will be healed completely. Have Cecil use the crystal that Golbez gave him to begin the fight.



Big Bang
1850
1710
2040
2150
1456
Zeromus
Edge 3171
Rosa 3065
Cecil 936
Rydia 2119
Palom 2212

Phoenix Downs and Megalixirs will be your best friends when Zeromus's Big Bang attack inflicts massive damage across the board.



In the center of the moon lies the incarnation of evil: Zemus.

LAST MONTH'S POWER QUIZ ANSWERS:

1: c, 2: b, 3: b, 4: c, 5: a, 6: b, 7: a, 8: c, 9: b, 10: a, 11: a

LAST MONTH'S NAME THAT SCREENSHOT:
SUPER MARIO BROS.2 (NES)

April 2006 Vol. 202

NEXT MONTH

Green meanie Weavel cuts through our next issue with more details on the next adventure in the Metroid saga.

A FOOL'S ARAN

Samus Aran versus six superbuff bounty hunters? She'll need all the help she can get in Metroid Prime Hunters, featured on our next cover.

PHANTASTIC JOURNEY

The pure rush of retro gaming that is Tales of Phantasia gets its due in a multipage miniguide.

EVIL AMONG US

Capcom's zombies take up residence on the DS in Resident Evil: Deadly Silence. We celebrate with a review and bloody-good strategies.

SPRING HARVEST

Harvest Moon hits the DS in March. We'll have details in an exclusive preview.

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SUPER PRINCESS PEACH
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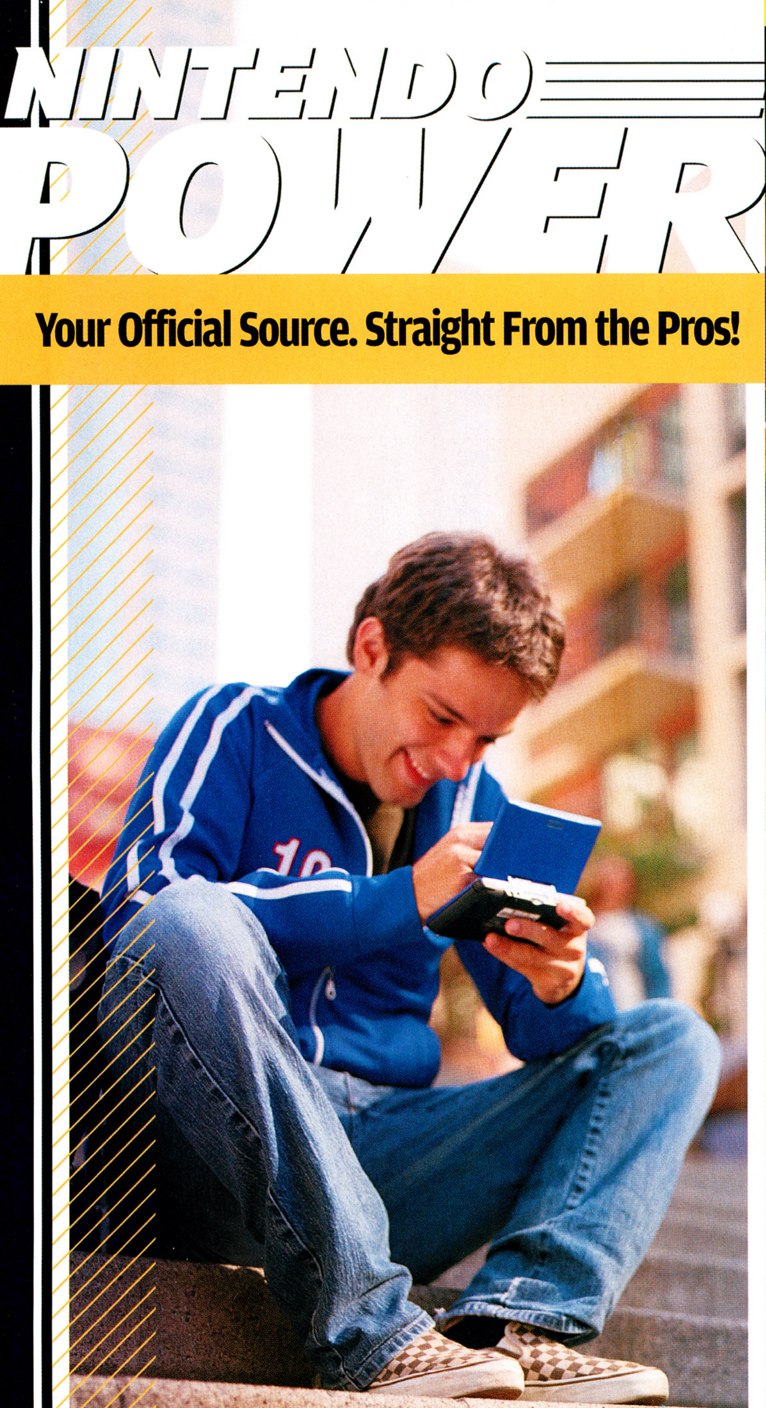

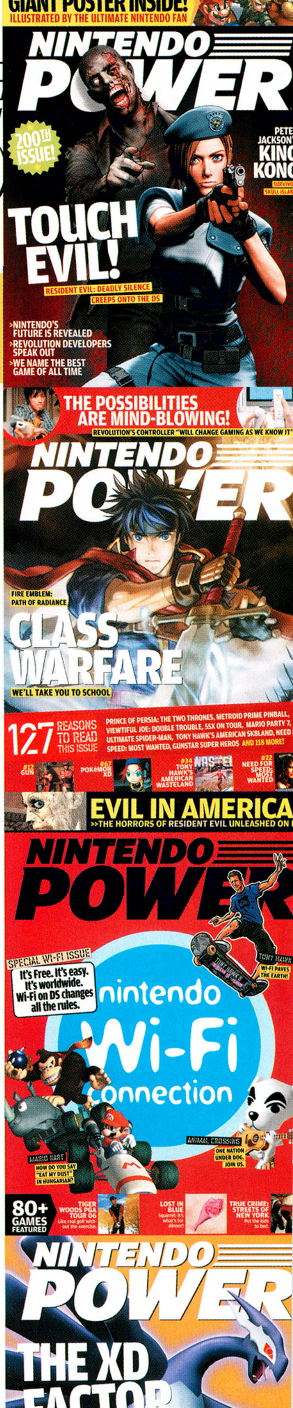
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ILLUSTRATED BY THE ULTIMATE NINTENDO FAN
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JACKSON
KIN
KON
SURVIVO
SKULL ISLAN
TOUCH EVIL!
RESIDENT EVIL: DEADLY SILENCE
CREEPS ONTO THE DS
>NINTENDO'S FUTURE IS REVEALED
>REVOLUTION DEVELOPERS SPEAK OUT
>WE NAME THE BEST GAME OF ALL TIME
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CLASS WARFARE
WE'LL TAKE YOU TO SCHOOL
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#67 POKéMON XD
#34 TONY HAWK'S AMERICAN WASTELAND
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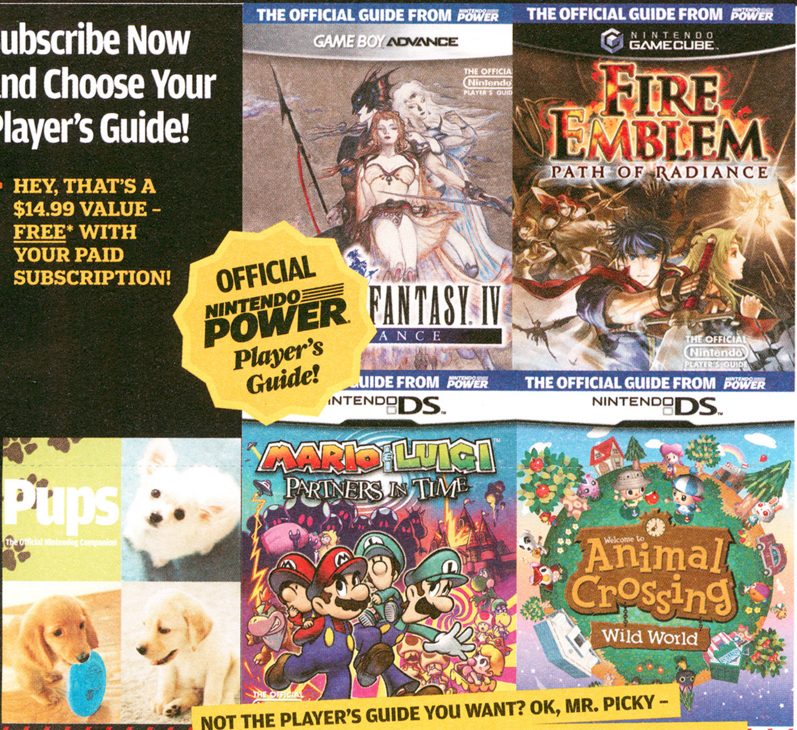
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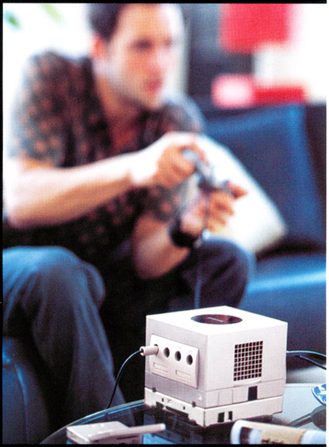

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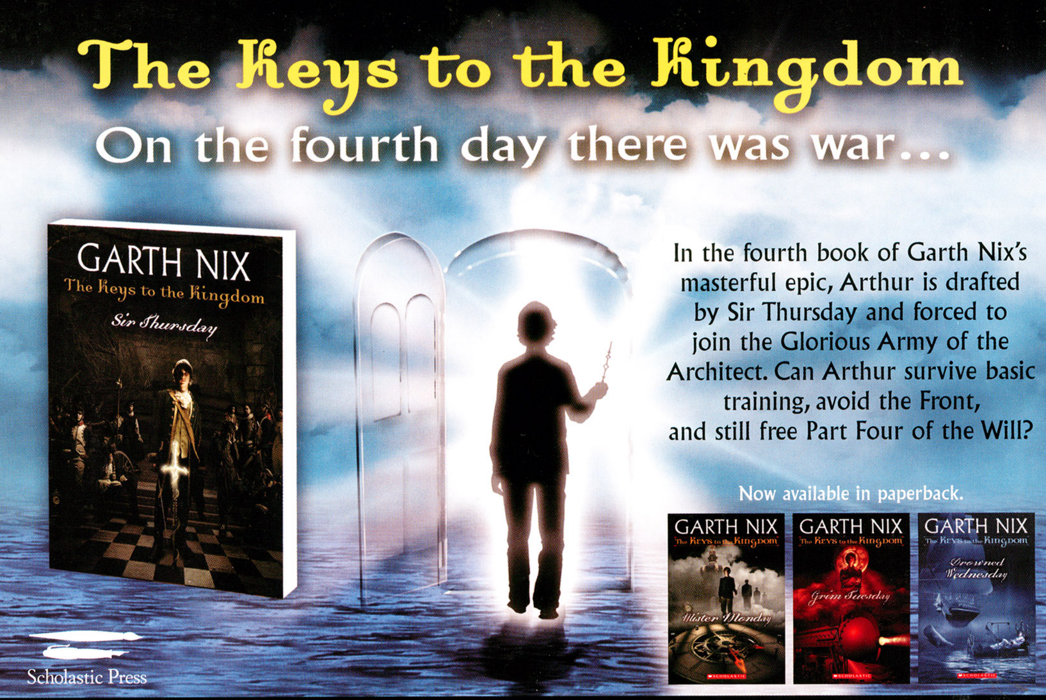
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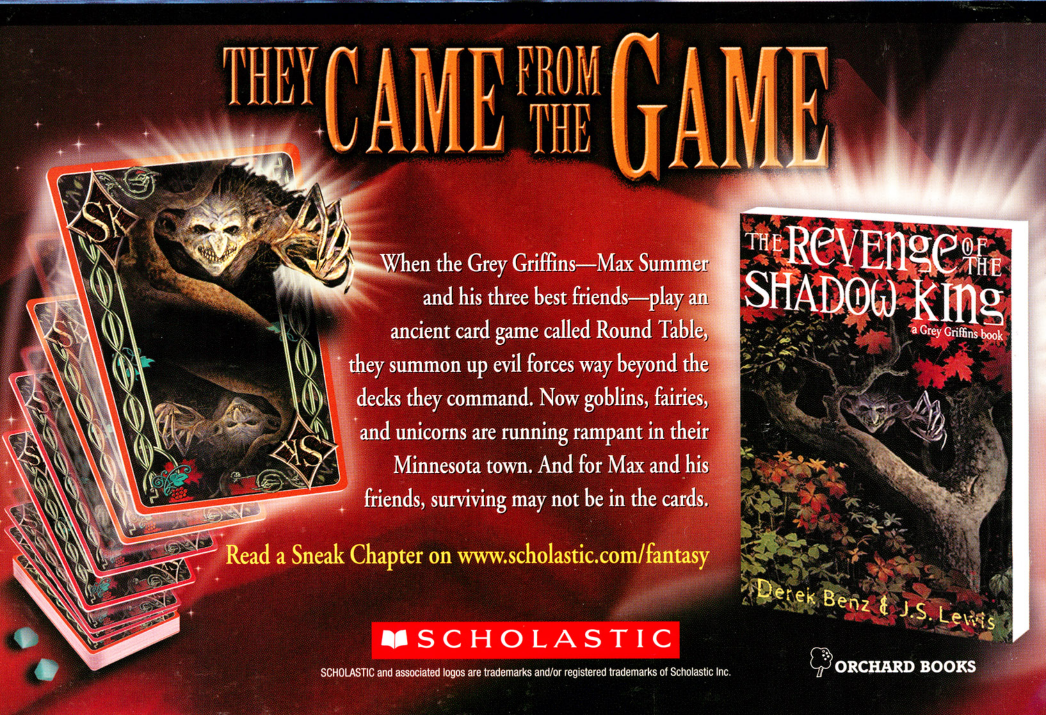
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